

# Ipswich Local Plan Local Development Scheme for Ipswich

12<sup>th</sup> Edition (11<sup>th</sup> Revision)

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## **Planning Reforms and Future Local Plan Preparation**

### **1. Statutory Context**

1.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 ('the Act'), as amended by the Planning Act 2008 and Localism Act 2011, requires the Council to prepare and maintain a 'local development scheme'. This document is the revised local development scheme for Ipswich (also referred to as the 'LDS') and is the twelfth edition. It replaces the eleventh edition of the LDS for Ipswich published in November 2020.

1.2 The Government is currently proposing significant reforms to the plan-making process, as well as to the content of future Local Plans, through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act which received Royal Assent in October 2023. These planning reforms are proposed to be implemented in Autumn 2024. These include transitional arrangements under which any local plan being prepared under the current system would need to be submitted for Examination by 30th June 2025 and then adopted by 31st December 2026. Plans not submitted by that date would need to be prepared under the new system.

1.3 The Council therefore anticipates that a future Local Plan would be prepared under the new system. Further secondary legislation, policy and guidance is needed before plans can begin to be prepared under the new system. The new system will also include provision for local authorities to prepare Supplementary Plans, which it is proposed would either relate to a small area (e.g. a site) or be a design code. These would form part of the development plan.

1.4 The Government is also considering, as outlined in its consultation on 'Plan-making reforms: consultation on implementation' (July 2023), allocating local authorities into 'waves' to begin plan-making under the new system. If this proposal is taken forward this is likely to influence when the preparation of a new Local Plan can begin. The Council does not therefore envisage being able to commence the formal stages of plan preparation before 2025. However, early preparations for commencing a review will take place in the short term, beginning in 2024, including consideration of the scope, the likely evidence needed, and resourcing considerations.

1.5 The LDS for Ipswich sets out the development plan documents that Ipswich Borough Council is preparing, or intends to prepare, including an indication of timescales of the local planning policy framework, known as the Ipswich Local Plan. The LDS also explains the subject matter and geographical coverage of the documents, and the timetables for their preparation and on-going review.

1.6 It is necessary to review the November 2020 LDS timetable to take account of:

- The adoption of the Ipswich Local Plan on 23 March 2022;
- The adoption of the 2024 Statement of Community Involvement;

- The aforementioned regulatory changes - secondary legislation for many aspects is awaited;
- The adoption of supplementary planning documents; and
- The local plan timetables of our neighbouring authorities within the Ipswich Strategic Planning Area (ISPA).

1.7 This revised LDS sets an indicative timetable that the Council expects to meet. The Council will keep under review its position and timetable for plan preparation once further details of the national reforms are available.

1.8 This LDS for Ipswich is publicly available via the Council website: [www.ipswich.gov.uk](http://www.ipswich.gov.uk). Alternative formats will be made available as required.

1.9 Whilst Ipswich Borough Council is responsible for much of the planning system for the Borough, Suffolk County Council remains responsible for preparing a minerals and waste development scheme. Suffolk County Council adopted the Minerals and Waste Local Plan in July 2020.

1.10 This is a focused review of the LDS, pending the outcome of secondary legislation. The Council will need to respond to any introduced detail through regulation detailing the form of changes to be implemented through the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act. to the planning system when they are in force. The Council therefore anticipates that a future Local Plan would be prepared under the new system.

1.11 If you would like to discuss any aspects of this document, please contact the planning policy team at the address on the front cover of this document.

## **2. The Purpose and Content of the Local Development Scheme**

2.1 The local development scheme has three main purposes. These are:

- To inform the public about documents that will make up the planning policy framework for Ipswich, and the timescales for the preparation of these documents;
- To establish and reflect Council priorities and to enable work-programmes to be set for the preparation of documents; and
- To set a timetable for the review of the documents once they have been prepared.

2.2 A Local Development Scheme sets out the timetable for the planning documents that the Council will prepare to plan for development in its area. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires a local planning authority to prepare and maintain a Local Development Scheme relating to the preparation of development plan documents. Section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 sets out that a Local Development Scheme must specify:

- the local development documents which are to be development plan documents;
- the subject matter and geographical area to which each development plan document is to relate;
- which development plan documents (if any) are to be prepared jointly with one or more other local planning authorities;
- any matter or area in respect of which the authority have agreed (or propose to agree) to the constitution of a joint committee under section 29;
- the timetable for the preparation and revision of the development plan documents such other matters as are prescribed.

2.3 This LDS supersedes the previous Local Development Scheme adopted November 2020.

### **Neighbourhood Plans**

2.4 Neighbourhood plans are also development plan documents. This type of planning document was introduced by the Government through the Localism Act 2011 and supporting regulations. The provisions of the Localism Act for neighbourhood planning came into force on 6th April 2012. They allow a community to prepare a plan for its neighbourhood, provided the plan is in general conformity with strategic policies in the local plan for the area, and is subject to independent examination and a referendum. At present, there are no proposals by communities for the preparation of neighbourhood plans in Ipswich.

### **Community Infrastructure Levy**

2.5 The community infrastructure levy is a charge that local planning authorities may choose to levy on new development to fund infrastructure needed to support growth, usually taking the form of a charge per unit area of floorspace and may vary between types of development (i.e. housing, retail, industry). Ipswich Borough Council have not adopted CIL for contributions but rather use the S106 system.

2.6 New arrangements for infrastructure contributions from part of the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act and the Council is waiting secondary legislation. All Councils will eventually move across to this new system for securing contributions.

### **Statement of Community Involvement**

2.7 The Statement of Community Involvement deals specifically with how the Council will involve the community in planning. The SCI does not itself contain planning policies. A review of the Ipswich SCI was adopted in 24 January 2024 and replaced the previous March 2018.

### **Authority Monitoring Report**

2.8 All local planning authorities are required to prepare and publish an authority monitoring report at least every twelve months, to report progress on implementing

the LDS and implementing policies in plans. The most recent AMR is available via the Council's website.

2.9 Under the current Duty to Co-operate (to be replaced with a new mechanism under the reformed system) the Council will also continue to actively engage with adjoining authorities and other Duty to Co-operate bodies on strategic cross-boundary matters. The Ipswich Strategic Planning Area (ISPA) Board is the vehicle for cross boundary planning in the ISPA, which consists of the whole of Babergh and Mid Suffolk Districts, the former Suffolk Coastal area of East Suffolk Council and Ipswich Borough. The Board comprises councillors and officers from the four local planning authorities and Suffolk County Council. The ISPA Terms of Reference were agreed in July 2018 and are available to view on the ISPA page of the Ipswich Borough Council website, together with action notes from meetings (<https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/content/ipswich-strategic-planning-area>).

### **A Summary of the Local Development Scheme for Ipswich**

Document	Ipswich Borough Council Local Plan
Subject matter	Comprehensive Local Plan review (dependent on topics to be covered under future National Development Management Policies). The Plan would update and supersede the current Ipswich Local Plan. The plan period will cover at least up to 2044, based on planning ahead at least 15 years from adoption.
Geographical area	The Borough of Ipswich (working with neighbouring authorities as appropriate)
Indicative timetable	This indicative timetable is based on formal commencement in Spring / Summer 2025 - a detailed timetable will be established at the point at which the Council commences a review. Early consideration of scope and detailed timetable, including through the Council's Planning Working Group meetings, and including resourcing considerations (2025) Initial evidence gathering and early engagement (2025) Draft the local plan, including 2 public consultations (2026 - 2028) Submit Plan to Secretary of State (2028) Examination (2028 - 2029) Adoption (2029)

## **Supplementary Planning Documents**

2.10 Ipswich Borough Council has adopted the following SPDs:

- Development and Flood Risk SPD July 2022
- Low Emissions SPD December 2021
- Local List (Building of Townscape Interest) SPD July 2021
- Reptile Strategy SPD July 2021
- Suffolk Coast RAMS SPD February 2020
- Ipswich Town Centre and Waterfront Public Realm SPD July 2019
- Ipswich Urban Character Studies SPD July 2019
- Development and Archaeology SPD November 2018
- Public Open Space SPD March 2017
- Cycling Strategy SPD July 2016
- Shop Front Design Guide SPD July 2016
- Development and Flood Risk SPD January 2016 (This SPD has been superseded by the Development and Flood Risk SPD July 2022)
- Space and Design Guidelines SPD November 2015

2.11 County-wide supplementary guidance has been prepared by the County Council on parking standards, including car and cycle parking, which was adopted by Ipswich Borough Council on 10th February 2015 and updated October 2023. Suffolk County Council have also prepared a S106 developers Guide to Infrastructure Contributions in Suffolk published in 2023.

2.12 The planning reforms propose removing the ability to prepare and adopt Supplementary Planning Documents, anticipated from Autumn 2024 onwards, and consideration would need to be given to the format of future guidance – the Council will monitor the changes as they come forward. In addition to the Supplementary Planning Documents topic based guidance maybe prepared from time to time to assist people preparing planning applications.

## **Profiles of Local Plan Documents**

2.13 Until such time as the regulative frameworks have been published in detail through secondary legislation we are not able to outline the profiles effectively.

## **3. Risk Assessment**

3.1 The Council is required in this local development scheme to set out a timetable for the delivery of local development documents. In the absence of key secondary legislation the timetable is indicative. It is important to identify the risks that could affect the work programme set out in this revised local development scheme, and to consider how the risks may be minimised and mitigated.

## Risk Assessment for Revised Local Development Scheme

Risk	Likelihood H/M/L	Impact H/M/L	Mitigation / contingencies
Global pandemic un	Med	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning Team set up for home working.</li> <li>• SCI can be updated to ensure consultation requirements can be met with movement restrictions in place.</li> <li>• Council decision making processes are able to be conducted virtually.</li> </ul>
Uncertainty over future national planning reforms	High	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council have and will continue to respond to the Government's planning consultations on planning reforms'</li> <li>• The Council will monitor detailed proposals such as transitional arrangements as they are published and assess implications for delivering the Local Plan.</li> <li>• Changes to the timing of the introduction of planning reforms, and the introduction of details such as secondary legislation, policy and guidance – officers continually monitor progress and consultations on proposals are responded to. The Local Plan timetable above is indicative and will be reviewed following introduction of the planning reforms. The reforms are also likely to affect the ability to adopt SPDs after Autumn 2024.</li> </ul>
Reduction in staffing levels impacts ability to deliver the work programme	High	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use consultants particularly for specialist work, dependent on available funding.</li> <li>• Look at possibility to increase resources within the team.</li> <li>• Look to alternative sources of help e.g. secondments from the development management team</li> <li>• Exit interviews are conducted to find out why staff leave so that any</li> </ul>

			<p>“push” factors may be identified and addressed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IBC has a staff performance, development and review system in place.</li> <li>• Ultimately, we will need to monitor the staffing situation and adjust timetables if there is no alternative.</li> </ul>
Risk to IBC’s LDS timetables in undertaking joint working.	Med	Med	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exchange information on timetables with neighbouring districts.</li> <li>• Undertake regular liaison with key officers to get early alert to any changes.</li> <li>• Working together through the Ipswich Strategic Policy Area Board</li> </ul>
Inadequate budget for preparation of plans or evidence base work.	High	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure future likely examinations and associated costs are considered within the Council’s budgeting process.</li> <li>• Ensure, as far as possible, that monies have been set aside in the Council’s budget.</li> <li>• Look for ways to add value to work e.g. through joint commissioning.</li> </ul>
Insufficient land availability to meet identified housing needs.	High	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work closely with adjoining authorities</li> <li>• Update the land availability evidence base</li> <li>• Consider other approaches to deliver housing need</li> </ul>
Neighbourhood Plans	Low	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council has no control over when and the number of neighbourhood plans that can come forward</li> <li>• If a neighbourhood plan came forward this would have a significant impact on staff capacity and other projects</li> </ul>
Capacity of Planning Inspectorate to support the emerging local plan process.	Low	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaise with Planning Inspectorate in revising the LDS and keep PINS up to date if timetables change (only affects development plan documents).</li> </ul>

Compressed programming of local plan preparation (set nationally)	Med	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage non-local plan workload so as to ensure that LDS targets are met.</li> <li>• Employ robust project management approaches.</li> <li>• Continue to improve web-based comment system to make processing representations more efficient.</li> </ul>
Documents being found unsound/subject to legal challenge	Low	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the Planning Advisory Service soundness self-assessment tool kit.</li> <li>• Take legal advice on plan process and content.</li> <li>• Ensure accurate records are kept of the process.</li> <li>• Ensure evidence base is robust.</li> </ul>
Age of some of evidence base by the time we get to examination	Med	Med	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update information where possible.</li> </ul>
Water resources pressures and changes to the surface water drainage adoption arrangements	Med	Med /High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suffolk is water supply critical and the Water Authorities are restricting heavy water users consent to 2030/35.</li> <li>• Slows down of delivery of heavy water use industries.</li> <li>• Water Resources East Plan helps to mitigate identified risk.</li> <li>• Impact and bedding in of new national imposed surface water drainage bodies, with their separate consent mechanisms, may slow new development – much of this is still awaiting secondary legislation.</li> <li>• Impact of climate change on drinking water and surface water drainage through increased flooding/storm events.</li> </ul>

### Monitoring and Review

3.2 This Local Development Scheme will be kept under review and updated as necessary (or replaced with alternative timetable documents as required under the reformed planning system) in relation to future Local Plan preparation. The Ipswich local development scheme is monitored on an annual basis, looking at

the period from 1st April to 31st March and an Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) is published with the results.