

**Appendix 3: Local and National Context**

This document details key legislation as well as the local and national context that guides our work and has shaped the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025 – 2030.

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## 1. Legislation

This section provides an overview of the UK legislation that sets out how Councils must meet their statutory obligations towards homeless households and those at risk of becoming homeless.

**1.1 The Housing Act 1996 & the Homelessness Act 2002** Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 is the primary legislation regarding preventing homelessness and assisting households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. The Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homeless (Priority need for accommodation) (England) Order 2002 was introduced to ensure a more strategic approach and to extend the priority need categories to include more vulnerable groups.

**1.2 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017** placed additional duties on Local Authorities to intervene earlier to prevent homelessness and extended the requirement to aid those without a "priority need". It extended the prevention duty to begin 56 days prior to the threat of homelessness and introduced an additional 56-day relief duty when a household becomes homeless. **The Homelessness Code of Guidance** sets out how Local Authorities should operate their homelessness functions in line with the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

**1.3 The Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023** is concerned with the regulation and oversight of supported exempt accommodation and enforcement powers in relation to this.

**1.4 The Renters Rights Bill** aims to change and improve the experience of private renting by giving renters more security and stability. It will deliver several measures including abolishing Section 21 evictions, introducing a new Private Landlord Ombudsman, strengthening Local Authority enforcement, and applying the Decent Homes Standard and Awaab's Law to the sector.

**1.5 The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023** increases regulation within the sector, and introduced new rules for protecting tenants from serious hazards in their homes following the fire at Grenfell Tower in 2017 and the death of Awaab Ishak in 2020.

**1.6 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021** amended Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 to provide a new definition for domestic abuse and more support for victims. It extended the priority need category to all eligible victims who are homeless because of domestic abuse.

**1.7 The Care Act 2014** sets out how adult social care should be delivered by local authorities (Suffolk County Council) to ensure residents receive the support they need to minimise the impact of their care needs or prevent deterioration.

**1.8 The Welfare Reform Act 2012** introduced Universal Credit to replace existing means tested benefits and tax credits. This was in addition to other significant changes in the benefits system such as the introduction of Personal Independence Payments (PIP) and restrictions on Housing Benefits entitlement for social housing tenants through the social sector size criteria and the benefit cap.

**1.9 The Equality Act 2010** legally protects people from discrimination because of nine protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation).

**1.10 The Children Act 1989** ensures that every child is kept safe and protected from harm and the welfare and developmental needs of every child are met.

## 2. The national context

This section provides an overview of the national policies, schemes and pressures that have an impact on homelessness and rough sleeping within Ipswich.

**2.1 The Rough Sleeping Strategy (2018)** set out a plan and commitment to end rough sleeping by 2027, by supporting those rough sleeping to move off the street and into a home. Local Authorities were provided with funding to develop Rough Sleeping Initiatives to achieve this.

**2.2 Ending Rough Sleeping for Good (2022)** built upon its previous Rough Sleeping Strategy (2018), the updated strategy introduced centres around prevention, intervention, recovery, and a joined-up approach. It provided a definition for the goal to end rough sleeping as "preventing it wherever possible, and where it cannot be prevented, making it rare, brief and non-recurring". The refreshed strategy was accompanied by further government funding.

**2.3 The "Everyone In" Initiative** ensured that those rough sleeping were safely accommodated during the Coronavirus pandemic declared by the World Health Organisation in March 2020.

**2.4 The Homes for Ukraine scheme** allowed UK residents to sponsor Ukrainian nationals and their families and to provide them with refuge from the war following the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The scheme provided three-year visas which allowed full access to public services, benefits, and support.

**2.5 Afghan citizens resettlement schemes** include the: Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) that assists those who supported the UK's efforts in Afghanistan and vulnerable people, including women and girls at risk. Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) that assists qualifying Afghan nationals who have worked with the UK government to relocate to the UK.

**2.6 Economic pressures** have been having a significant effect on UK residents since the end of 2021 due to a fall in disposable income caused by higher inflation and low wage growth. This negatively affects the ability of households to pay for goods, services, and essential bills such as food, heating, and housing costs. This has been further impacted by the war in Ukraine and the increased cost of energy.

**2.7 Pressures on public services** including Local Authorities, mental health services, and social care, which are experiencing the effects of national challenges such as reduced budgets and increased demand in relation to the provision of good quality services.

**2.8 National housing shortages** are a result of current housing supply in England falling short of what is deemed necessary to ensure all residents are living in suitable, safe, and secure housing. To address this issue, all Local Authorities in England will be given updated mandatory housing targets to meet the national ambition of 1.5 million additional homes. This will have an impact on the Council's services and new housing provision across the borough.

### 3. The local context

This section provides an overview of the local policies, schemes and pressures that have an impact on homelessness and rough sleeping within Ipswich.

**3.1 The Ipswich Borough Council Corporate Strategy** is the corporate plan adopted in 2023 "Proud of Ipswich: Championing our community and revitalising our town", which centres around five priorities:

- A thriving town centre.
- Meeting the housing needs of our community.
- A carbon neutral council.
- Promoting community wellbeing and fairness in Ipswich.
- A financially sustainable council providing good quality services.

**3.2 The Ipswich Borough Council Housing Strategy 2025-2030** sets out our plans to meet the housing needs of the residents of Ipswich.

**3.3 The Ipswich Borough Council Digital Strategy** describes how we will further the use of digital services and take opportunities to transform our service delivery to meet the needs of our community.

**3.4 The Gateway to Homechoice Allocations Policy** sets out how social housing is allocated across the Gateway area.

**3.5 The Ipswich Borough Council Domestic Abuse Policy** outlines the Council's commitment to Council tenants, leaseholds, temporary licensees, and occupants to take a zero-tolerance approach to domestic abuse.

**3.6 The Joint Protocol** has been developed to address the overlapping duties that Suffolk County Council and Ipswich Borough Council have towards care leavers under the Housing Act 1996 and the Childrens Act 1989.

**3.7 The Suffolk County Council Safe Accommodation Strategy** outlines how Suffolk County Council and its partners will meet the accommodation and support needs of domestic abuse victims.

**3.8 The Suffolk County Council VORG Strategy** sets out how Suffolk County Council and its partners aim to tackle violence against women and girls in Suffolk.

**3.9 The Suffolk Health and Housing Needs Assessment** provides an analysis of the effect of housing on the health of Suffolk residents and makes recommendations to guide future work across Suffolk. It recommends that Suffolk Housing Board lead the development of a "Housing Health Audit" to address housing health hazards, with a focus on private rented accommodation where housing conditions tend to be worse, and to strengthen links between health, public health, communities and the Suffolk Office of Data and Analytics (SODA).

**3.10 Suffolk Housing Board** comprises Local Authorities within Suffolk working together towards the shared vision that "all residents in Suffolk lead independent, healthier lives through the supply of affordable, quality homes which provide choice within sustainable communities".

**3.11 The Campbell Tickell Report** was commissioned in 2023 by Suffolk Housing Board to provide recommendations on developing a system approach to prevent rough sleeping ahead of the ending of the current government funding arrangements in 2025. Recommendations included “upstreaming” interventions by focussing on early prevention measures that enable residents to maintain their accommodation, taking a Suffolk wide system approach to address homelessness, and adopting the government vision for ending homelessness where it is “prevented wherever possible and, where it cannot be prevented, it is rare, brief and non-recurring”.

**3.12 Tackling Poverty in Suffolk 2022** details how Suffolk County Council and its partners support people to move out of poverty.

