

PROUD OF IPSWICH

**ensuring access to high quality affordable
homes for our residents**



PLAIN ENGLISH VERSION



“
*Proud of Ipswich,
Proud of our homes.*
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Foreword

Having a good suitable home is a basic human need and is essential to our health and wellbeing.

In the last few years, more people have turned to their local council for support with housing due to financial difficulties. Local council finances have also been affected by economic pressures across the country. There is a national shortage of housing, and the government has set ambitious targets to build new homes to help with this. This strategy sets out the ways that we will meet the housing needs of Ipswich residents and ensure we use our resources well, in the face of these challenges.

This strategy sets out the need to use data to ensure the housing we provide meets the needs of the local people, as well as the need to continue to encourage the building of affordable homes. There is also a focus on maintaining and improving the conditions of social and private rented homes.

Homelessness and rough sleeping is an important priority and is discussed in a separate Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

During this strategy, alongside our partners, we will continue to do what we do well, but will also face the challenges, with a focus on providing high quality homes for the residents of Ipswich. We also want to make sure we continue to deliver housing services that are fit for the future and that we can be proud of.

Councillor Alasdair Ross
Housing Portfolio Holder



Key Facts

about housing in Ipswich

By 2043: 20% more one-person households 24% less households with two or more children.	May 2024: 55% of people over the age of 60 on the Council's social housing waiting list had accessibility needs.	2023/24: 205 houses built or adapted for occupation. 7 were affordable housing.
2021: 187 licenced HMOs.	Council homes sold through Right to Buy: 2013-2018: 341 2019-2023: 278	2023: Average house prices Ipswich: £257,927 England: £349,359
2022: 61,628 properties, 13% owned by the Council.	2015-2023: 161 people registered their interest in building their own home.	2021 Census: 4% of households are overcrowded, which means that there are too many people living in one house.
2021 Census: 66% of households are underoccupied, meaning people living in a house with more bedrooms than they need.	2023: 13% of Ipswich households saw their mortgage payments increase and 14% saw their rent payments increase.	May 2024: 2,849 active applicants on Gateway to Homechoice. 46% required a one- bedroom property.
April 2018 - March 2024: 1,473 new homes.	By 2043: 62% more people aged 75 and older.	Average rent price in 2024: £868

Achievements

for Ipswich Borough Council

2022/23: 59 households downsized, freeing up 81 bedrooms.	2022/23: We received 219 complaints and replied to all of them within our 20-working day deadline.	2023/24: 100% of Council homes and 87% of private rented homes meet the Decent Homes Standard.
2023/24: 656 households prevented or relieved from homelessness.	2018/19 – 2022/23: 117 new Council homes.	We built more Council homes suitable for wheelchair users.
We used and promoted the Disabled Facilities Grant to help more people live independently.	2023/24: We brought 20 long-term empty properties back into use.	We introduced the Safe Suffolk Renters programme alongside other Councils in Suffolk to improve conditions in the private rented sector.
2023 annual count: 5 rough sleepers found.	We created a new online portal for Council tenants to report repairs.	2022/23: We licenced 31 HMOs.
We participated in two programs to support the private rented sector to improve its energy efficiency .	2018-2024: We carried out over 7,000 improvements to our homes.	2023/24: 719 social houses were let through Choice Based Lettings.

8 The challenges

Ten of the challenges we face to deliver high quality housing advice services.

01 Demand for social housing

there is not enough social housing for the amount of people that need it.

02 Financial pressures on public services

general pressure on public services has an impact on the homelessness services the Council can provide.

03 Limited land to build on

there is not much suitable land available within the borough to build new housing on.

04 Tackling homelessness

as more households experience financial hardship, the more at-risk they are of experiencing homelessness.

05 Improving and accessing the private rented sector

helping people to enter the private rented sector and ensuring that private rented homes are good quality and safe.

06 Increasing sustainable housing

making homes more environmentally friendly and making sure that new houses are too, especially when it comes to energy efficiency.

07 Delivering affordable homes

building houses that residents can afford to live in is difficult due to economic pressures across the country.

08 Early prevention of housing problems

identifying households with housing problems sooner rather than later to help prevent homelessness and costs to the public.

09 Addressing building safety

ensuring that our buildings are safe for our residents.

10 Ensuring compliance with the Social Housing (Regulation) Act

making sure that we are doing everything that is required of us under the new Social Housing (Regulation) Act.

Our Housing Strategy priorities

Our Housing Strategy focuses on five key priorities which explain how we will meet the housing needs of our community and continue to develop housing and housing services in Ipswich we are proud of.

Our priorities

01 Ensure housing of all types and tenures is available to meet housing need.

02 Improve the quality and standard of all housing.

03 Be an excellent landlord to our tenants.

04 Support households to maintain access to accommodation.

05 Ensure older persons have access to housing and services that meet their needs.

10 Priority 01:

Ensure housing of all types and tenures is available to meet housing need

We want to make sure that the residents of Ipswich have access to enough high-quality housing that they can afford to live in and is environmentally friendly. We will build more Council housing and we will also encourage home builders to build more houses that meet the needs of the town's residents and have a positive impact on the environment. We will continue to work to bring empty homes back into use. We will work with partner agencies to explore all options to provide the housing that the residents of Ipswich need.

To achieve this, we will:

- **Aim 1** Use data and careful planning to deliver high quality homes that our residents need and can afford to live in, working to meet targets set by the government.
- **Aim 2** Explore options to build homes on land that currently poses a challenge (for example, due to archaeology or flood risk).
- **Aim 3** Do what we can to ensure that high quality houses are available that meet the needs and budget of current and future residents.
- **Aim 4** Continue to use our legal powers to ensure that private rented accommodation is of high quality.



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Priority 02:

Improve the quality and standard of all housing

We will continue to work to improve housing across Ipswich as we want all homes to be good quality and safe to live in. We will make sure that any new houses are high quality and contribute to a greener future. We will listen to our tenants and make changes to our council houses and services based on what they have to say. We will make sure privately rented accommodation is good quality by working with our partners and using our legal powers.

To achieve this, we will:

- **Aim 1** Ensure every private rented home is of good quality and safe to live in by using our enforcement powers where necessary, and by engaging with our partners to encourage landlords to improve energy efficiency.
- **Aim 2** Work with everyone building homes in Ipswich to support them to build homes that are good quality and contribute to a greener future.
- **Aim 3** Deal with the building safety crisis with our partners to ensure that building regulations are met.
- **Aim 4** Improve Council homes and neighbourhoods.



Be an excellent landlord to our tenants

We will be an excellent landlord to Council tenants by providing them with good quality homes and listening to them and making changes to our services based on what they have to say. We will continue to work on developing a variety of housing options for older people that meet their needs. We will build more affordable housing, when possible.

To achieve this, we will:

- **Aim 1** Increase, improve, and renovate Council housing.
- **Aim 2** Make improvements to our homes to ensure they are more environmentally friendly, especially when it comes to energy efficiency.
- **Aim 3** Engage with tenants and use their feedback to improve our services and deliver an excellent customer experience.
- **Aim 4** Collect and analyse data to improve our services.



Support households to maintain access to accommodation

We will continue to work with our partners to support residents, including the most vulnerable, to stay in suitable accommodation. We will ensure our services are easy to use. We will use data and technology to focus our resources where they are most needed and have a better impact on residents and their needs.

To achieve this, we will:

- **Aim 1** Work with our partners within Suffolk to ensure we deliver good quality services that are easy to use and meet the needs of all residents.
- **Aim 2** Work with our partners to support residents, including the most vulnerable, to find and stay in suitable accommodation.
- **Aim 3** Use data to understand housing need in Ipswich and to prevent and relieve homelessness.



14 **Priority 05:**

Ensure older persons have access to housing and services that meet their needs

We want to provide good quality and modern homes to older people that support them to live independently and provide them with a positive social environment. We want to offer a flexible and personalised service that meets the needs of older people, wherever they choose to live.

To achieve this, we will:

- **Aim 1** Create a strong brand of homes and services that the older residents of Ipswich want and desire.
- **Aim 2** Provide accommodation that is modern, safe, and high quality.
- **Aim 3** Provide older persons housing in locations which offer the facilities and services that older people need as they age well.
- **Aim 4** Provide wider options for older persons, and less older persons housing schemes.
- **Aim 5** Offer support to anyone that wants to age well in their own home.



Delivering our housing priorities

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Over the next five years of this strategy, we will work to achieve the aims we have set out.

The detail of how we will achieve these aims is set out in our action plan.

We will not be able to achieve all of these aims at once, and we will not be able to achieve them all ourselves. We will prioritise our work to deal with the most important issues first, and we will continue to work closely with our partners to achieve these goals.

In addition to the strategy, there are many documents that support it. These include other strategies, policies, and plans.

Consultation

To make sure that our housing colleagues who work within the Council, the organisations we work with, and the residents of Ipswich agree with the strategy and could help to develop it we:

- Had regular meetings with a manager from each housing team.
- Included feedback from the Corporate Management Team into the public consultation documents and the strategy.
- Had a public consultation.

The consultation report can be found in appendix 4.



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