



# Ipswich Local Plan

## Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report

### Ipswich Borough Council

**Final report**

Prepared by LUC

June 2026

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Ipswich Local Plan

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

**1.1** Ipswich Borough Council commissioned LUC in May 2026 to produce a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Scoping Report for the new Ipswich Local Plan.

**1.2** SEA is an assessment process designed to consider and communicate the significant sustainability issues and effects of emerging plans and policies within them, including their alternatives. SEA iteratively informs the plan-making process by helping to refine the contents of plans, so that they maximise the benefits of sustainable development and avoid, or at least minimise, the potential for adverse effects.

**1.3** The SEA process comprises a number of stages that need to be undertaken alongside Local Plan preparation:

- Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope of the environmental assessment.
- Stage B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects.
- Stage C: Preparing the environmental report.
- Stage D: Consulting on the Local Plan and the environmental report.
- Stage E: Monitoring the significant environmental effects of implementing the Local Plan.

**1.4** Scoping is the first stage in the SEA process. The purpose of this Scoping Report is to provide the context for, and determine the scope of, the SEA of the new Local Plan and to set out the framework for undertaking the later stages of the SEA.

It should be noted that this report is in an 'accessible format', which means it has been formatted to meet the requirements of the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations (2018), as set out in the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.1). This means it must have larger font, larger spacing between lines and headings, less information presented in tables, 'alt text' provided for all figures and it is able to be read by screen-reading software.

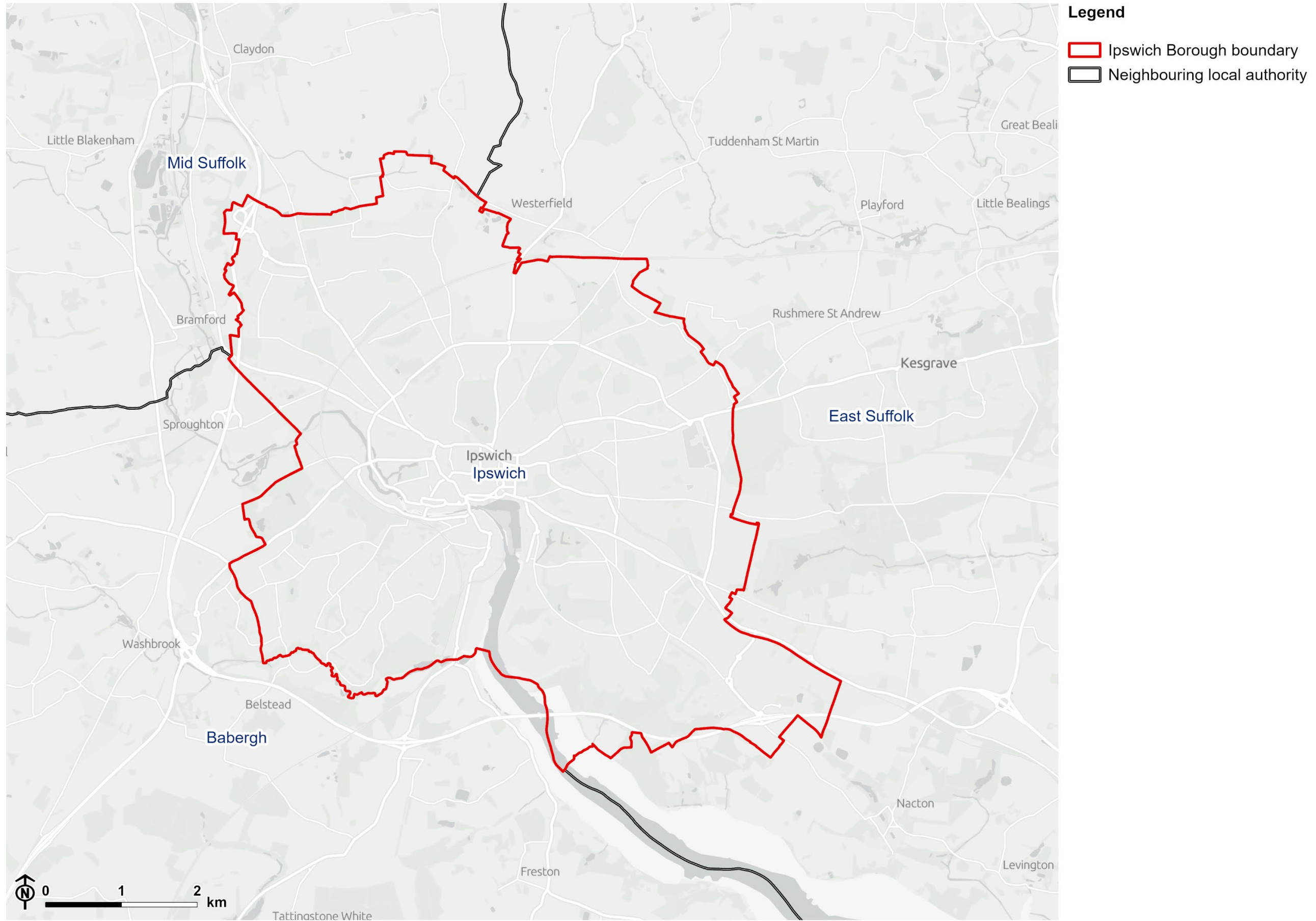
## The plan area

**1.5** Ipswich Borough lies in the East of England and is one of six authorities within Suffolk, alongside West Suffolk Council, East Suffolk Council and Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils, in addition to the Broads Authority. The historic Borough covers an area of 39.50km<sup>2</sup> and as of 2024, had a population of 140,274 and the highest population density in the county of Suffolk [See reference 1] [See reference 2]. Transport links are relatively good compared to other parts of Suffolk, reflected in comparatively low levels of car ownership in the Borough (75.2%) in comparison to neighbouring authorities [See reference 3]. The Borough benefits from the InterCity main line to London with direct links to Colchester, Stratford and Bury St. Edmunds.

**1.6** Despite the largely urban nature of much of the Borough, Ipswich benefits from access to 518ha of open space, sport and recreation facilities [See reference 4]. Additionally, there are areas of high biodiversity value, including the internationally important sites of the Stour and Orwell Estuaries. There are also 20 County Wildlife Sites, nine Local Nature Reserves and two areas of Ancient Woodland within the Borough.

**1.7** The location of Ipswich Borough is shown in **Figure 1.1** overleaf.

Figure 1.1: Location of Ipswich Borough



Created by LUC - Location 04/06/2026

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## Ipswich Local Plan

**1.8** Ipswich Borough Council adopted its Local Plan Review 2018-2036 in March 2022. The adopted Local Plan Review comprises the following documents:

- Core Strategy and Policies Development Plan Document (DPD) Review;
- Site Allocations and Policies (Incorporating IP-One Area Action Plan) DPD Review;
- Policies Map; and
- IP-One Area Action Plan Inset Policies Map.

**1.9** The Ipswich Borough Council planning policy team is now embarking on producing a new Local Plan and is in the early stages of this process. The Local Plan will be prepared under the new plan-making system and will cover the period up to at least 2045. The Council undertook a public Call for Sites process for the new Local Plan between October and December 2025.

## Strategic Environmental Assessment

**1.10** It is necessary to conduct an environmental assessment of the new Local Plan in accordance with the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (European Directive 2001/42/EC), as transposed into law in England by the SEA Regulations [[See reference 5](#)]. This remains in force despite the UK exiting the European Union in January 2020.

**1.11** In October 2023, the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill received royal assent. The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act outlines a number of reforms to the planning system, including the replacement of the current SEA regime with a new requirement for an Environmental Outcomes Report (EOR). Consultation took place in 2023 on the proposals for EORs, and the Government published its response in March 2026 along with a roadmap for the introduction of the new system, which is expected to be in place by the end of 2027. The specific requirements will be set out in forthcoming regulations, along with information about transition arrangements; however, at present the requirement for SEA remains as set out in existing legislation. Any changes to the legal framework for carrying out SEA will be addressed as appropriate as the Local Plan is prepared.

**1.12** At the time of writing, Government guidance on the new plan-making system continues to refer to the requirement for SEA, noting that "your plan will need to carry out SEA if it meets criteria set out in regulation 5 of The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. We expect that all local plans will need to carry out SEA."

**1.13** The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has confirmed that Local Plans being prepared under the new system are no longer required to be subject to Sustainability Appraisal, as was previously required under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 for Local Plans prepared under the previous system.

## Habitats Regulations Assessment

**1.14** The requirement to undertake Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of development plans was confirmed by the amendments to the Habitats Regulations published for England and Wales in July 2007, updated in 2010 and again in 2012 and 2017 [See reference 6]. The Regulations translate Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (Habitats Directive) and 79/409/EEC (Birds Directive) into UK law and remain a legal requirement despite the UK exiting the European Union.

**1.15** The purpose of HRA is to assess the impacts of a land-use plan against the conservation objectives of a European site and to ascertain whether it would adversely affect the integrity of that site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

**1.16** The HRA of the Ipswich Local Plan will be undertaken and reported on separately but the findings will be taken into account in the SEA where relevant (for example to inform judgements about the likely effects of potential development locations on biodiversity).

## Meeting the requirements of the SEA Regulations

**1.17** The relevant sections of the Scoping Report that are considered to meet the SEA Regulations requirements are signposted below (the remainder will be met during subsequent stages of the SEA of the Ipswich Local Plan). This information will be included in the full SEA Report at each stage of plan making to show how the requirements of the SEA Regulations have been met.

**1.18** The SEA Regulations [See reference 7] require the responsible authority to prepare, or secure the preparation of, an ‘environmental report’, which in this case will comprise the SEA report. The report shall identify, describe, and evaluate the likely significant effects on the environment of the following (requirements in green shaded text below, where each requirement is met is provided in the bullets below):

Implementing the plan or programme; and reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan or programme. *Regulation 12(2)*

- The full SEA Report that will be produced to accompany consultation on the Local Plan will constitute the ‘environmental report’ and will be produced at a later stage in the SEA process but will include the relevant parts of the Scoping Report as noted below.

An outline of the contents and main objectives of the plan or programme, and of its relationship with other relevant plans and programmes. *Schedule 2(1)*

- Covered in **Chapter 1** and **Chapter 2**.

The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme. *Schedule 2(2)*

- Covered in **Chapter 3** and **Chapter 4**.

The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected. *Schedule 2(3)*

- Covered in **Chapter 3**.

Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as a European site (within the meaning of regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017). *Schedule 2(4)*

- Covered in **Chapter 3** and **Chapter 4**.

The environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or national level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation. *Schedule 2(5)*

- Covered in **Chapter 2**.

The likely significant effects on the environment, including short, medium and long-term effects, permanent and temporary effects, positive and negative effects, and secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects, on issues such as: (a) biodiversity; (b) population; (c) human health; (d) fauna; (e) flora; (f) soil; (g) water; (h) air; (i) climatic factors; (j) material assets; (k) cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage; (l) landscape; and (m) the interrelationship between the issues referred to in sub-paragraphs (a) to (l). *Schedule 2(6)*

- Requirement will be met at a later stage in the SEA process.

The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme. *Schedule 2(7)*

- Requirement will be met at a later stage in the SEA process.

An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information. *Schedule 2(8)*

- Requirement will be met at a later stage in the SEA process.

A description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with regulation 17. *Schedule 2(9)*

- Requirement will be met at a later stage in the SEA process.

A non-technical summary of the information provided under paragraphs 1 to 9. *Schedule 2(10)*

- Requirement will be met at a later stage in the SEA process.

The report shall include such of the information referred to in Schedule 2 to these Regulations as may reasonably be required, taking account of:

- current knowledge and methods of assessment;
- the contents and level of detail in the plan or programme;
- the stage of the plan or programme in the decision-making process; and
- the extent to which certain matters are more appropriately assessed at different levels in that process in order to avoid duplication of the assessment. *Regulation 12 (3)*

- This Scoping Report and the environmental report will adhere to this requirement.

**1.19** In terms of consultation, the SEA Regulations require that:

When deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the report, the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies. *Regulation 12(5)*

- This Scoping Report is being made available at the same time as the Local Plan Scoping (Regulation 20) consultation. As required by the SEA Regulations, it will be sent to the statutory bodies (the Environment Agency, Historic England, and Natural England) for comment.

Every draft plan or programme for which an environmental report has been prepared in accordance with regulation 12 and its accompanying environmental report (“the relevant documents”) shall be made available for the purposes of consultation in accordance with the following provisions of this regulation.

As soon as reasonably practicable after the preparation of the relevant documents, the responsible authority shall:

- send a copy of those documents to each consultation body;
- take such steps as it considers appropriate to bring the preparation of the relevant documents to the attention of the persons who, in the authority’s opinion, are affected or likely to be affected by, or have an interest in the decisions involved in the assessment and adoption of the plan or programme concerned, required under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Directive (“the public consultees”);
- Inform the public consultees of:
  - (a) the address of the website at which the relevant documents may be viewed and downloaded free of charge;
  - (b) the fact that a copy of the relevant documents may be obtained by email from the responsible authority;
  - (c) the fact that a copy of the relevant documents may be obtained by post from the responsible authority, provided that it is reasonably practicable for the authority to provide a copy by post;

- (d) the address, email address and telephone number for the purpose of requesting a copy of the relevant documents either by email or by post;
- (e) whether a charge will be made for copies of the relevant documents provided by post and the amount of any charge; and
- (f) the telephone number which can be used to contact the responsible authority for enquiries in relation to the relevant documents

The period referred to in paragraph (2)(d) must be of such length as will ensure that the consultation bodies and the public consultees are given an effective opportunity to express their opinion on the relevant documents.

*Regulation 13(1)(2)*

- Public consultation on the Local Plan and accompanying SEA Reports will take place as the Local Plan develops. The intended programme and key stages for plan preparation are set out in the Local Plan Timetable.

Where a responsible authority, other than the Secretary of State, is of the opinion that a plan or programme for which it is the responsible authority is likely to have significant effects on the environment of a Member State, it shall, as soon as reasonably practicable after forming that opinion:

- notify the Secretary of State of its opinion and of the reasons for it; and
- supply the Secretary of State with a copy of the plan or programme concerned, and of the accompanying environmental report. *Regulation 14(1)*

- Unlikely to be relevant to the Ipswich Local Plan, as there will be no effects beyond the UK.

**1.20** In terms of taking the environmental report and the results of the consultations into account in decision-making, the SEA Regulations require (relevant extracts of Regulation 16):

As soon as reasonably practicable after the adoption of a plan or programme for which an environmental assessment has been carried out under these Regulations, the responsible authority shall:

- publish the plan or programme, as adopted, its accompanying environmental report and a statement containing the particulars specified in paragraph (4) (“the relevant adoption documents”) on a public website at which the documents may be viewed and downloaded free of charge;
  - provide a copy of the relevant adoption documents by email to any person who requests a copy, as soon as reasonably practicable after receipt of that person’s request;
  - provide one copy of the relevant adoption documents by post to any person who requests a copy, as soon as reasonably practicable after receipt of that person’s request, unless it is not reasonably practicable to provide a copy by post for reasons connected to the effects of coronavirus, including restrictions on movement;
  - make available a telephone number for the public to make enquiries in relation to the relevant adoption documents; *Regulation 15(4)*
- Requirement will be met at a later stage in the SEA process.

As soon as reasonably practicable after the adoption of a plan or programme the responsible authority shall inform (i) the consultation bodies; (ii) the persons who, in relation to the plan or programme, were public consultees for the purposes of regulation 13; and (iii) where the responsible authority is not the Secretary of state, the Secretary of State, that the plan or programme has been adopted, and a statement containing the following particulars:

- how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme;
- how the environmental report has been taken into account;
- how opinions expressed in response to: (i) the invitation in regulation 13(2)(d); (ii) action taken by the responsible authority in accordance with regulation 13(4), have been taken into account;
- how the results of any consultations entered into under regulation 14(4) have been taken into account;
- the reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and

- the measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme.  
*Regulation 16(2)(4)*

- Requirement will be met at a later stage in the SEA process.

**1.21** The SEA Regulations also require that the responsible authority shall monitor the significant effects of the implementation of each plan or programme with the purpose of identifying unforeseen adverse effects at an early stage and being able to undertake appropriate remedial action (Regulation 17(1)). This requirement will be met after adoption of the Local Plan.

## Structure of the Scoping Report

**1.22** This chapter describes the background to the preparation of the Ipswich Local Plan and the requirement to undertake SEA. The remainder of this Scoping Report is structured into the following sections:

- **Chapter 2** describes the other plans, policies and programmes of relevance to the SEA of the Ipswich Local Plan.
- **Chapter 3** presents the baseline information which will inform the assessment of the policies and sites in the Local Plan.
- **Chapter 4** identifies the key environmental issues in Ipswich of relevance to the Local Plan and considers the likely evolution of those issues without its implementation.
- **Chapter 5** presents the SEA framework that will be used for the appraisal of the Local Plan and the proposed method for carrying out the SEA.
- **Chapter 6** describes the next steps to be undertaken in the SEA of the Local Plan.

## Chapter 2

### Relevant plans and programmes

2.1 Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations requires:

- An outline of the contents and main objectives of the plan or programme and of its relationship with other relevant plans and programmes.
- The environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or national level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation.

2.2 In order to establish a clear scope for the SEA it is necessary to review and develop an understanding of the environmental objectives contained within international and national plans and programmes that are of relevance to the Ipswich Local Plan. Given the SEA Regulations requirements above, it is also necessary to consider the relationship between the Ipswich Local Plan and other relevant plans, policies and programmes.

2.3 This chapter summarises the relationship of the Ipswich Local Plan to the relevant international and national plans, policies and programmes which should be taken into consideration during preparation of the Local Plan and its SEA, as well as those plans and programmes which are of relevance at a sub-national level. The objectives of these plans and programmes have been taken into account when drafting the SEA framework in **Chapter 5**. An outline of the content and main objectives of the Local Plan will be described in subsequent SEA reports, as this emerges through the plan-making process.

### The implications of Brexit

2.4 As of the end of January 2020, the UK is no longer a member of the EU. Principally, the UK's environmental law is derived from EU law or was directly effective EU law. As a result of Brexit, the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 converts existing EU law which applied directly in the UK's legal system (such as EU Regulations and EU Decisions) into UK law and preserves laws made in the UK to implement EU obligations (e.g. the laws which implement the EU Directive). This body of law is known as retained EU law and could be subject to future, post-Brexit amendments.

**2.5** As set out in the Explanatory Memorandum accompanying the Brexit amendments [See reference 8], the purpose of the Brexit amendments to the SEA Regulations is to ensure that the law functions correctly after the UK has left the EU. No substantive changes are made by this instrument to the way the SEA regime operates.

**2.6** Relevant international plans and programmes (including those at the EU level) are transposed into national plans, policies and legislation and these have been considered in this chapter.

## Relationship with other relevant plans or programmes

**2.7** The Ipswich Local Plan is not prepared in isolation and must be in conformity with a range of international and national plans and programmes. In addition, the Ipswich Local Plan will comprise any 'made' Neighbourhood Plans within the Borough (there are currently none in Ipswich).

### International

**2.8** At the international level, there are a wide range of plans and programmes which act to inform and shape national level legislation. Planning policy in England at a national and local level (i.e. the NPPF and Local Plans) is in conformity with the relevant legislation.

### National

**2.9** There is an extensive range of national plans, policies and programmes that are relevant to the Local Plan and the SEA process. A pragmatic and proportionate approach has been taken with regards to the identification of key national plans, policies and programmes, focusing on those that are of most relevance. A summary of the main objectives of national plans and programmes, including the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance, of relevance to the Local Plan and the SEA is provided below.

## The National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance

**2.10** The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) [See reference 9] is the overarching planning framework which provides national planning policy and principles for the planning system in England. The NPPF was originally published in March 2012 and has since been updated and revised several times, with the most recent version published in December 2024 (and amended further in February 2025). At the time of writing, consultation has closed in relation to a further update to the NPPF; however, until such time that an updated NPPF is formally published, the December 2024 version remains current.

**2.11** The three overarching objectives of the planning system are set out in paragraph 8 of the NPPF, which should be pursued in mutually supportive ways so that net gains are achieved across each of the different objectives:

- “an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
- a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and
- an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.”

**2.12** The new Local Plan must be consistent with the requirements of the NPPF, which states:

Succinct and up-to-date plans should provide a positive vision for the future of each area; a framework for meeting housing needs and addressing other economic, social and environmental priorities; and a platform for local people to shape their surroundings.

**2.13** A local planning authority is also required to have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State when preparing a Local Plan **[See reference 10]**.

**2.14** Paragraph 20 of the NPPF states the need for strategic policies in plan-making, which set out the overall strategy for the pattern, scale and design quality of places, making sufficient provision for:

- “homes (including affordable housing), employment, retail, leisure and other commercial development;
- infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, security, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);
- community facilities (such as health, education and cultural infrastructure); and
- conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.”

**2.15** The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) **[See reference 11]** provides guidance for how the Government’s planning policies for England are expected to be applied. Sitting alongside the NPPF, it provides an online resource that is updated on a regular basis for the benefit of planning practitioners.

**2.16** The overarching nature of the NPPF means that its implications for the SEA relate to multiple topics which this report seeks to address. Considering the importance of the NPPF to the English planning system, the relevance of the framework and its implications for the plan-making process and the SEA is provided in more detail below. The SEA topics listed in the SEA Regulations are set out below (some of which have been combined), although consideration of issues often cuts across topics. The summary provided below is not absolutely comprehensive and the NPPF is intended to be read and applied as a whole during plan making.

## **Biodiversity (including flora and fauna)**

**2.17** The NPPF sets out the approach Local Plans should have in relation to biodiversity, and states that plans should “identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation”. Plans should also “promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity”. A strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure is to be supported through planning policies.

**2.18** The NPPF states that the planning system should protect and enhance sites of biodiversity or ecological value and soils in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or quality, while also encouraging the reuse of previously developed land.

**2.19** The Ipswich Local Plan should seek to maximise any opportunities arising for biodiversity. This should be inclusive of approaches which are supportive of enhancing the connectivity of green infrastructure and promoting the achievement of biodiversity net gain. The SEA process should support the identification and maximisation of potential benefits through the consideration of alternatives and assessment of both negative and positive significant effects.

## **Population and human health**

**2.20** In relation to population and human health, healthy, inclusive and safe places which promote social integration, are safe and accessible, and enable and support healthy lifestyles are supported through the framework. The Building for a Healthy Life design toolkit [\[See reference 12\]](#) can be used by local authorities to assist in the creation of places that are better for people and nature.

**2.21** One of the core planning principles is to “take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community”. It is identified in the document that “a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities”. Furthermore, “the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities,

such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship” is supported. Importantly, Local Plans should also “contain policies to optimise the use of land in their area and meet as much of the identified need for housing as possible”. Additionally, larger scale developments such as new settlements or significant extensions to existing villages and towns are required by the NPPF to be guided by policies set within a vision that looks at least 30 years ahead [See reference 13]. The need for policies to be reflective of this longer time period is to take account of the likely timescale for delivery.

**2.22** The delivery of new housing is considered to support local communities and their wellbeing by meeting housing needs and addressing shortages. The new Ipswich Local Plan can have a significant influence on addressing inequalities including those relating to health and will need to consider the appropriate siting of new development, particularly large development sites that are likely to include new service and facility provisions. The Local Plan can ensure that new development is located in areas which can improve accessibility for existing as well as new residents and ensure that future development does not exacerbate existing inequalities. The SEA process can support the identification and refinement of options that can contribute to reducing inequalities and support the development of policy approaches that cumulatively improve the wellbeing of local communities.

### **Soils, water and air**

**2.23** The NPPF states that new and existing development should be prevented from “contributing to, being put at an unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability”. Inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided. Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account implications for water supply. Furthermore, strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development, and provide sufficient infrastructure for water supply and wastewater.

**2.24** The NPPF states that the planning system should protect and enhance soils in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or quality, while also encouraging the reuse of previously developed land. The new Local Plan can seek to ensure the appropriate protection of soil quality, including best and most versatile agricultural land. Further to this, the Local Plan should ensure that new development does not conflict with current mineral operations (there are no active quarries in Ipswich Borough) as well as long-term mineral resource plans.

The SEA process should inform the development of the new Local Plan by helping to identify alternatives which would avoid areas of highest soil quality and best and most versatile agricultural land (as far as this is relevant to Ipswich Borough), as well as those which would promote the use of brownfield land.

**2.25** The new Ipswich Local Plan presents an opportunity to consider incorporating targets for water efficiency and the level of water consumption and grey water recycling in any new development. The Local Plan also can ensure that development is sited away from areas of high flood probability and that appropriate water drainage is in place in line with flood risk strategies. The SEA process should seek to identify and address potential negative effects on the water environment, including implications relating to wastewater.

**2.26** According to the NPPF, planning policies should sustain and contribute towards compliance with relevant limit values or national objectives for pollutants, taking into account the presence of Air Quality Management Areas and Clean Air Zones, and the cumulative impacts from individual sites in local areas. Opportunities to improve air quality or mitigate impacts should be identified for inclusion in the new Local Plan, such as through traffic and travel management, and green infrastructure provision and enhancement.

**2.27** Growth will inevitably increase traffic on the roads which also has implications for air quality, and the new Local Plan and SEA process can seek to minimise effects of this nature through appropriately siting new development, identifying where mitigation may be needed and requiring the necessary transport provisions and contributions from new development. The Local Plan, as supported by the SEA, should seek to identify opportunities to maximise the potential for alternative modes of transport to the car and reduce the need to travel, therefore reducing emissions, through the consideration of alternatives and assessment of significant effects. This includes potential opportunities that may arise as a result of the delivery of new infrastructure.

### **Climate change mitigation and adaptation**

**2.28** Climate change mitigation and adaptation, energy efficiency and waste minimisation measures for new development including through the promotion of renewable energy schemes are also supported through the NPPF. One of the core planning principles is to “support the transition to net zero by 2050 and take full account of all climate impacts including overheating, water scarcity, storm and flood risk and coastal change. It should help to shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources,

including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure”. Furthermore, local planning authorities should adopt “a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating and drought from rising temperatures”. The SEA can consider the contribution the alternatives make in terms of contribution to climate change mitigation as well as climate change adaptation.

**2.29** Although Local Plans can no longer require levels of the Code for Sustainable Homes, they can promote the Home Quality Mark to support residents in understanding the quality and performance of new build homes and can also set targets for developers to provide for a given percentage of energy used by a new development to come from on-site renewable or low carbon technologies. Revisions were made to the Building Regulations 2022 [See reference 14], setting minimum energy efficiency standards which are increasing the performance values of properties. From 15 June 2022, all new build homes are required to produce at least 31% fewer carbon emissions. Local Plan policies can further support the development of renewable energy technologies where appropriate, in line with climate change mitigation strategies and targets. The UK Green Building Council has produced a resource pack which is designed to help local authorities improve the sustainability of new homes. The New Homes Policy Playbook [See reference 15] sets out minimum requirements for sustainability in new homes that local authorities should introduce, as well as proposed stretching requirements should local authorities wish to go further. For non-residential uses, BREEAM assessments can be used by local authorities to ensure buildings meet sustainability objectives.

## Material assets

**2.30** The NPPF sets out that in terms of economic growth, the role of the planning system is to contribute towards building a “strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity”. There is also a requirement for the planning system to identify and coordinate the provision of infrastructure. Furthermore, planning policies should address the specific locational requirements of different sectors.

**2.31** Local planning authorities should incorporate planning policies which “support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation”. Local Plans are required to “set out a clear economic vision and strategy which

positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth, having regard to the national industrial strategy and any relevant Local Industrial Strategies and other local policies for economic development and regeneration”.

**2.32** The new Local Plan should seek to maximise the potential benefits of nearby strategic growth, while at the same time ensuring the vitality and viability of smaller localised economies. Ensuring that services and facilities within the Borough’s district and neighbourhood centres are maintained and enhanced is also important and will also provide support for local communities. The SEA process can support the development of the new Local Plan to ensure that its policies are considerate of impacts on the economy in Ipswich Borough. The process can also be used to demonstrate that impacts on the viability of Ipswich town centre has been considered.

**2.33** The NPPF encourages local planning authorities to consider transport issues from the earliest stages of plan making so that: opportunities to promote sustainable transport are identified and pursued; the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified and assessed; and opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure and changing transport technology and usage are realised. The framework also states that the planning system should actively manage growth patterns in support of these objectives.

### **Cultural heritage**

**2.34** The NPPF states that in relation to the historic environment, plans should “set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats”. Where appropriate, plans should seek to sustain and enhance the significance of heritage assets and local character and distinctiveness, while viable uses of assets should be considered. Plans should take into account the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring. They should also consider the contribution the historic environment can make to the character of a place.

**2.35** The new Local Plan can offer enhanced protection for designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings, including any potential archaeological finds in line with heritage protection and enhancement plans. The SEA has a role to play by identifying which alternatives could offer opportunities to secure the protection and enhancement of assets as well as those which might have significant impacts in terms of their appropriate use and setting.

## Landscape

**2.36** In relation to landscape, the NPPF sets the planning principles of recognising the intrinsic beauty and character of the countryside as well as protecting and enhancing valued landscapes. Reference is included with regards to this purpose at National Parks, The Broads and National Landscapes.

**2.37** The Local Plan should be supportive of an approach to development which would protect the landscape character of Ipswich Borough and its surrounds. Where appropriate it should also seek to protect the identity of the built-up area of Ipswich. The SEA should identify those alternatives which contribute positively to landscape and townscape character.

## Other national policies, plans and programmes

**2.38** Numerous other policies, plans and programmes (PPPs) at a national level are of relevance to the preparation of the Ipswich Local Plan and the SEA. Unlike the NPPF, most of the documents are focussed on a specific topic area which the SEA will consider. There will be some overlap between SEA topics covered by these plans and programmes where those documents contain more overarching objectives. However, the plans and programmes considered of most relevance to the SEA have been grouped by the topics they most directly seek to address, and the sections below each topic heading summarise the implications of the national PPPs for the Local Plan and the SEA.

## Biodiversity (including flora and fauna)

**2.39** The relevant national PPPs under this topic are:

- Environmental Outcomes Reports: Roadmap to reform (2026)
- Environmental Improvement Plan (2025)
- The Environment Improvement Plan (2023)
- Working with Nature (2022)
- Establishing the Best Available Techniques for the UK (UK BAT) (2022)
- The Environment Act (2021)
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations (2019)

- Environmental Damage (Prevention and Remediation) Regulations (2015)
- Biodiversity offsetting in England Green Paper (2013)
- Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services (2011)
- England Biodiversity Strategy Climate Change Adaptation Principles (2008)
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006)
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
- National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act (1949)

### **Implications for the Local Plan and SEA**

**2.40** The Local Plan should be prepared to limit the potential for adverse impacts on biodiversity. The Local Plan should help to ensure that ecological features are managed, protected and enhanced and that opportunities for habitat restoration or creation are encouraged. The Local Plan should also help to ensure that environmental pollution is minimised in order to protect the natural environment. The plan should also take into account non-designated habitats which form part of wider ecological network. The Local Plan also presents opportunities to promote the achievement of net gains in biodiversity. In terms of the location of development, the allocation of new sites for development and updated planning policy can also be used to achieve better habitat connectivity through the provision of new green infrastructure and the requirement for biodiversity net gain.

**2.41** The SEA is able to respond to this through the inclusion of SEA objectives relating to the protection and enhancement of biodiversity, in addition to green infrastructure provision.

### **Population and human health**

**2.42** The relevant national PPPs under this topic are:

- Health Bill (2026)
- The Future Homes and Buildings Standards: Building Circular 01/2026 (2026)
- Planning and Infrastructure Bill (2025)

- Renters' Rights Act (2025)
- Healthy Homes – a foundation for healthier and resilient communities (2025)
- Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (2024)
- Homes England Strategic Plan 2023 to 2028 (2023)
- Green Infrastructure Framework (2023)
- White Paper Levelling Up the United Kingdom (2022)
- A fairer private rented sector White Paper (2022)
- National Design Guide (2021)
- The Environment Act (2021)
- The State of the Environment: Health, People and the Environment (2021)
- Build Back Better: Our Plan for Health and Social Care (2021)
- COVID-19 Mental Health and Wellbeing Recovery Action Plan (2021)
- Using the planning system to promote healthy weight environments (2020)  
Addendum (2021)
- The Charter for Social Housing Residents: Social Housing White Paper (2020)
- Public Health England, PHE Strategy 2020 to 2025 (2019)
- The Housing White Paper 2017: Fixing our broken housing market (2017)
- Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standard (2015)
- Select Committee on Public Service and Demographic Change Report Ready for Ageing? (2013)
- Laying the foundations: housing strategy for England (2011)
- Fair Society, Healthy Lives (2010)
- Healthy Lives, Healthy People: Our strategy for public health in England (2010)
- Environmental Noise Regulations (2006)

## Implications for the Local Plan and SEA

**2.43** The Local Plan needs to consider the requirements for infrastructure as this has the potential to have a significant impact on population and human health, and it should be prepared to ensure that the population has access to sustainable low carbon infrastructure and services and facilities and that there is sufficient capacity within them to serve the increased population. This should include healthcare, education and open space.

**2.44** Local Plans should maximise the well-being benefits of well-designed local green spaces and ensure that the provision of open space and green infrastructure is of sufficient quantity and quality to meet the needs of the plan area, encourage healthy and active lifestyles, create fair, safe and inclusive communities, and improve the sustainable transport network including active travel networks within the plan area.

**2.45** The provision of an appropriate level of housing over the plan period will help address issues of disparity in terms of access to decent housing in the plan area. The provision of new housing should be considerate of local needs with regards to housing size, tenure and type, including the needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

**2.46** The SEA is able to respond to this through the inclusion of SEA objectives relating to health and wellbeing, social inclusion, and sustainable and active travel.

## Soils, water and air

**2.47** The relevant national PPPs under this topic are:

- The National Framework for Water Resources 2025: Water for Growth, Nature and a Resilient Future (2025)
- Plan for Water: Our Integrated Plan for Delivering Clean and Plentiful Water (2023)
- Air Quality Strategy for England (2023)
- Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans: guiding principles for the water industry (2022)
- Flood Risk Management Plans 2021-2027 (2022)
- National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England (2022)

- River Basin Management Plans (2022)
- Managing Water Abstraction (2021)
- Environment Act (2021)
- National Chalk Streams Strategy Chalk Stream Strategy (2021)
- Meeting our future water needs: a national framework for water resources (2020)
- Clean Air Strategy (2019)
- Environmental Noise Regulations (2018)
- Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations 2018
- Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017
- UK Plan for Tackling Roadside Nitrogen Dioxide Concentrations (2017)
- Drought response: our framework for England (2017)
- Environmental Permitting Regulations (2016)
- Nitrate Pollution Prevention Regulations (2015)
- Water White Paper (2012)
- National Policy Statement for Waste Water (2012)
- Air Quality Standards Regulations (2010)
- Flood and Water Management Act (2010)
- Groundwater (England and Wales) Regulations (2009)
- Flood Risk Regulations (2009)
- Future Water: The Government's Water Strategy for England (2008)
- Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (2007)
- Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations (2003)
- Environmental Protection Act (1990)

## Implications for the Local Plan and SEA

**2.48** The new Local Plan should help to ensure that environmental pollution is minimised in order to protect land and soils, ensure the efficient extraction of minerals, and to limit the potential for adverse impacts on higher value soils. Local planning authorities should consider setting out approaches in their Local Plans to promote the efficient use of water and limit all types of pollution including soil, water and air pollution. They should also seek to limit pressure on the wastewater treatment (WwT) infrastructure and water supply. The allocation of sites for development should take account of areas which are of highest sensitivity in relation to these issues, including Source Protection Zones (SPZs) and Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs). To limit the potential for air quality issues to be intensified as development is delivered over the plan period, local planning authorities should consider setting out approaches in their Local Plan to factor in the contribution that specific site options can make to achieving modal shift and limiting the need for residents to travel. The Local Plan should also consider the handling of waste in line with the waste hierarchy.

**2.49** The SEA is able to respond to this through the inclusion of SEA objectives relating to soil quality, water quality and resources and air quality.

## Climate change adaption and mitigation

**2.50** The relevant national PPPs under this topic are:

- Clean Energy Industries Sector Plan (2025)
- Hydrogen Update to the Market (2025)
- Onshore Wind Strategy (2025)
- Carbon Budget and Growth Delivery Plan (2025)
- Environmental Improvement Plan (2025)
- Clean Power 2030 Action Plan: A New Era of Clean Electricity (2024)
- Carbon Budget Delivery Plan (2023)
- Powering up Britain (2023)
- The Environment Improvement Plan (2023)
- Establishing the Best Available Techniques for the UK (UK BAT) (2022)
- British Energy Security Strategy (2022)
- The Environment Act (2021)

- The Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener (2021)
- The Industrial Decarbonisation Strategy (2021)
- The Heat and Buildings Strategy (2021)
- The UK Hydrogen Strategy (2021)
- Energy Performance of Buildings Regulations (2021)
- National Infrastructure Strategy: Fairer, faster greener (2020)
- The Energy White Paper: Powering our net zero future (2020)
- Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge (2020)
- Sixth Carbon Budget (2020)
- Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management: Policy Statement (2020)
- The National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England (2020)
- The Waste (Circular Economy) (Amendment) Regulations 2020
- Net Zero – The UK’s contribution to stopping global warming (2019)
- The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 and The Flood and Water Regulations 2019
- Climate Change Act 2008 and Climate Change Act 2009 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019
- The National Adaptation Programme and the Third Strategy for Climate Adaptation Reporting: Making the country resilient to a changing climate (2018)
- Our Waste, Our Resources: A strategy for England (2018)
- The Clean Growth Strategy (2017)
- National Planning Policy for Waste (NPPW) (2014)
- Waste Management Plan for England (2013)
- The Energy Efficiency Strategy: The Energy Efficiency Opportunity in the UK (2012)
- The Promotion of the Use of Energy from Renewable Sources Regulations (2011)

- The UK Low Carbon Transition Plan: National Strategy for Climate and Energy (2009)
- The UK Renewable Energy Strategy (2009)
- Planning and Energy Act (2008)

### **Implications for the Local Plan and SEA**

**2.51** The Local Plan should set out policies to achieve climate change adaptation while also encouraging development which would help to minimise carbon emissions. The Local Plan should help to ensure that new development is energy efficient and promotes the use of sustainable construction methods and materials, as well as reducing their carbon emissions. In addition, the Local Plan should seek to allocate development in areas where sustainable transport patterns can be best achieved and encourage development to make use of more sustainable sources of energy, potentially through the delivery of renewable energy development. The Local Plan should also ensure that risk from all sources of flooding as a result of climate change is managed effectively and should ensure that development is resilient to future flooding. This could include the Local Plan setting out approaches to encourage the appropriate use of SuDS to minimise flood risk.

**2.52** The SEA is able to respond to this through the inclusion of SEA objectives relating to the mitigation of climate change and adaptation to climate change, sustainable construction, flooding and sustainable transport.

### **Material assets**

**2.53** The relevant national PPPs under this topic are:

- Better Connected: a strategy for integrated transport (2026)
- Infrastructure: A 10 Year Strategy (2025)
- The UK's Modern Industrial Strategy (2025)
- The Plan for Change (2024)
- Kickstarting Economic Growth: Milestone: Raising Living Standards in Every Part of the United Kingdom (2024) and Rebuilding Britain (2024)
- Agricultural Transition Plan 2021 to 2024 (2024)
- UK Invest 2035: The Modern Industrial Strategy (2024)

- Future of Transport: Supporting Rural Transport Innovation (2023)
- Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy Report to Parliament (2022)
- The Growth Plan (2022)
- Build Back Better: Our Plan for Growth (2021)
- Decarbonising Transport: A Better, Greener Britain (2021)
- Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge (2020)
- Agricultural Transition Plan (2021 to 2024)
- Agriculture Act 2020
- Net Zero Strategy Delivering net zero aviation by 2050 (2020)
- The Road to Zero (2018)
- UK Industrial Strategy: Building a Britain fit for the future (2018)
- Transport Investment Strategy (2017)
- Highways England Sustainable Development Strategy and Action Plan (2017)
- LEP Network response to the Industrial Strategy Green Paper Consultation (2017)
- National Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2016-2021 (2016)
- Door to Door: A strategy for improving sustainable transport integration (2013)

## Implications for the Local Plan and SEA

**2.54** The Local Plan should allocate land to support the projected level of economic growth required over the plan period. Local planning authorities should consider setting out approaches in Local Plan policies to promote sustainable economic and employment growth to benefit all members of the community and to reduce disparity in the plan area. This should include support for the infrastructure required for the economy to function successfully. Employment sites should be located in areas that enable local people to be able to access new employment opportunities. Local planning authorities should consider setting out approaches in their Local Plan to promote the viability of town centres as well as local centres.

**2.55** The potential for reducing the need to travel, limiting congestion and associated benefits for air quality and climate change as well as public health should inform the preparation of the policies for the Local Plan and its site allocations. The Local Plan should also encourage walking and cycling as alternative modes of transport by providing safe and attractive walking and cycling infrastructure, as well as recognise the multiple benefits they bring in terms of physical and mental health, reducing carbon emissions and reducing air pollution. Furthermore, the selection of site options for development should be informed by issues such as the potential for access to new and existing public transport nodes and active transport routes and specific highways capacity issues. The selection of individual site options should also be informed by their proximity to essential services and facilities which is likely to reduce the need for residents to regularly travel long distances.

**2.56** The SEA is able to respond to this through the inclusion of SEA objectives relating to economic growth and employment and the provision of sustainable transport.

## Cultural heritage

**2.57** The relevant national PPPs under this topic are:

- Historic England Corporate Plan 2023-26 (2023)
- Heritage Statement (2017)
- Sustainability Appraisal and Strategy Environmental Assessment: Historic England Advice Note 8 (2016)
- Government's Statement on the Historic Environment for England (2010)
- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act (1990)
- Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979)
- Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act (1953)

## Implications for the Local Plan and SEA

**2.58** The potential impact of new development on the historic environment, including local character as well as designated and non-designated heritage assets and their respective settings, should also inform the preparation of the Local Plan. The Local Plan should set out a positive strategy for conserving, enhancing and enjoying heritage assets and their settings, including wider historic townscapes and landscapes. The Local Plan can help to realise the

wider benefits of historic environment enhancements which include contributions to well-being and addressing the climate and biodiversity emergencies. Particular regard may be given to protecting heritage assets which have been identified as being 'at risk' (both at the national and local levels). Local planning authorities should consider setting out approaches in their Local Plans to address these issues and site options should be considered with regard to the potential for related issues. The Local Plan should consider the contributions that the historic environment can make to the success of development and for the enhancement of the historic environment from sustainable development proposals.

**2.59** The SEA is able to respond to this through the inclusion of SEA objectives relating to the historic environment.

## Landscape

**2.60** The relevant national PPPs under this topic are:

- Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework (2024)
- An Approach to Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (2019)
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006)
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
- National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act (1949)

### Implications for the Local Plan and SEA

**2.61** The Local Plan should be prepared to limit the potential for adverse impacts on important landscapes (including those that are designated). The Local Plan should also help to ensure that designated and valued landscapes are protected and enhanced, and that development should be sympathetic to local character and history including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting. The plan should also take into account non-designated landscapes identified as particularly sensitive to development.

**2.62** The SEA is able to respond to this through the inclusion of SEA objectives relating to the character of landscapes and townscapes.

## Sub national

**2.63** Below the national level there are further plans and programmes which are relevant to the Local Plan and the SEA process. These plans and programmes sit at the county and Borough levels and details are provided below.

- Ipswich Borough Council's Biodiversity Strategy: Enhancing Urban Life Through Access to Nature (2026)
- Suffolk's Local Nature Recovery Strategy (2025)
- Suffolk's Local Transport Plan 2025-2040 (2025)
- Ipswich Area Transport Plan (2025)
- Suffolk Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (2024)
- Levelling up the East of England: 2023-2030 (2023)
- Transport East's Transport Strategy 2030-2050 (2023)
- Proud of Ipswich: Championing our community and revitalising our town (2023)
- Cornhill Strategy (2023)
- Ipswich Borough Council's Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2022-2027 (2022)
- Suffolk Minerals & Waste Local Plan (2020)

## Implications for the Local Plan

**2.64** The new Local Plan needs to consider the above sub-regional and Borough plans for the East of England and Ipswich Borough.

**2.65** The Local Plan should support the aim to transition towards net zero and support climate change mitigation and adaptation. The Local Plan should meet the commitments that Ipswich Borough Council made to reduce its own emissions following the declaration of a climate emergency in 2019.

**2.66** The Local Plan offers the opportunity to maximise the well-being benefits of well-designed open spaces and areas for recreation. The Local Plan should help to ensure that the provision of open space and areas of recreation is of sufficient quantity and quality to meet the needs of the plan area, encouraging healthy and active lifestyles. The Local Plan should also consider opportunities for biodiversity enhancement within open spaces and across Ipswich Borough.

**2.67** The provision of an appropriate level of housing will help address issues of inequality in relation to housing in the plan area and support economic growth. The provision of new housing should be considerate of local needs, including the needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. The new Local Plan should support economic growth within Ipswich Borough, including infrastructure requirements. This economic growth should align with the aims in the East of England.

**2.68** The Local Plan should encourage the use sustainable forms of transport such as walking and cycling and public transport. The Local Plan should also support the infrastructure requirements to enhance and decarbonise transport within Ipswich Borough. A transport plan for the East of England has been produced and should be taken into consideration.

## Surrounding development plans

**2.69** Development in Ipswich Borough will not be delivered in isolation from those areas around it. Given the interconnection between Ipswich Borough and the surrounding areas there is potential for cross-boundary and in-combination effects where development is proposed through development plans in neighbouring authorities. Therefore, consideration should also be given to the plans for the following local authority areas which surround Ipswich Borough:

- Babergh and Mid Suffolk Districts; and
- East Suffolk District.

**2.70** As the SEA progresses, consideration will be given to the extent to which the content of these other plans could lead to in-combination effects with the Ipswich Local Plan, for example as a result of any large-scale new development being proposed in close proximity to the Borough boundary.

## Chapter 3

### Baseline information

**3.1** Baseline information provides the basis for predicting and monitoring the likely sustainability effects of a plan and helps to identify key sustainability issues and means of dealing with them.

**3.2** Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations requires information to be provided on:

- The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme;
- The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected; and
- Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as a European site (within the meaning of regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017).

**3.3** This section presents the relevant baseline information for Ipswich Borough. Data referred to have been chosen primarily for regularity and consistency of collection, to enable trends in the baseline situation to be established, and also to enable subsequent monitoring of potential sustainability effects. Where figures are referred to, these can be found at the end of the chapter.

### Biodiversity

**3.4** The biodiversity interest of Ipswich Borough is recognised in various site designations which are listed in **Table 3.1** below [\[See reference 16\]](#). A map showing the designated biodiversity and geodiversity assets is provided in **Figure 3.1**.

**Table 3.1: Summary of designated sites within Ipswich Borough**

Site designations	No. of sites	2022-2024 site area (ha)
Site of Special Scientific Interest	3	47.47
Special Protection Areas/Ramsar site	1	41.27
County Wildlife Site	20	266.87
Local Nature Reserve	9	49.84
Ancient woodland	2	3.58

**3.5** The Stour and Orwell Estuaries are located to the south east of Ipswich Borough. The Orwell Estuary falls partly within the Borough boundary, while the Stour Estuary lies outside of it. Both are designated Ramsar sites and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) which are European designations. Other nearby European sites include:

- Hamford Water candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC);
- Hamford Water SPA and Ramsar site;
- Deben Estuary SPA and Ramsar site;
- Sandlings SPA;
- Staverton Park and the Thicks SAC;
- Alde-Ore Estuary SPA and Ramsar site;
- Alde, Ore and Butley Estuaries SAC; and
- Orfordness–Shingle Street SAC.

**3.6** Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are of national importance for their wildlife, geology or landform and are designated by Natural England. There are three SSSIs (detailed in **Table 3.2** below) that fall either wholly or partially within the Borough. The following additional SSSIs also border or are close to the Borough [**See reference 17**]:

- Bramford Meadows SSSI;

- Sproughton SSSI; and
- Bobbitshole Belstead SSSI.

**Table 3.2: SSSIs within Ipswich Borough**

SSSI	Main habitat	Area (ha)	Favourable condition (%)	Unfavourable – no change (%)	Unfavourable – declining condition (%)
Stoke Tunnel Cutting	Earth heritage. Stoke Tunnel Cutting SSSI is of special interest for its geological features and contains interglacial lake bed deposits dated at approximately 210,000 years old.	2.2	47.12	0	52.88
Orwell Estuary	Built up areas and gardens, littoral sediment, neutral grassland (lowland) and standing open water and canals. Orwell Estuary SSSI provides an important site for species such as the black-tailed godwit, brent goose, red shank, and is also designated for its littoral sediment features and vascular plant assemblage.	1335.53	0	0	100
Bixley Heath	Dwarf shrub heath and fen, marsh and swamp (lowland). Bixley Heath SSSI supports a mix of lowland dry heath, waterlogged swamp and tall-herb fen, creating a species rich mix in a small site, which includes characteristic plants such as the eupatorium cannabinum.	5.08	0	44.71	55.29

**3.7** Suffolk County Council is responsible for developing the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Ipswich Borough and has worked closely with the Norfolk and Suffolk Nature Recovery Partnership, the Broads National Park Authority and Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape along with a range of other partners and stakeholders. Suffolk's LNRS was published in October 2025 and aims to identify local actions and locations where nature recovery can be delivered.

**3.8** Ipswich Borough Council created a Wildlife Network Map in 2014, highlighting the important wildlife sites and areas for improvement [See reference 18]. The map is implemented in the adopted Local Plan, and an updated version can be found as Plan 5: Ipswich Ecological Network [See reference 19]. The Borough is also recognised as a Tree City of the World and has an ambitious canopy cover target of 22% by 2050, exceeding national expectations [See reference 20]. Data from 2025 show that three wards have met the 22% target; Gainsborough; St Margarets; and Stoke Park [See reference 21]. The Borough also contains two areas of Ancient Woodland: Brazier's Wood and Bridge Wood, covering a combined area of 3.58 hectares [See reference 22].

**3.9** There are currently 20 County Wildlife Sites in Ipswich Borough. The biggest sites include:

- Chantry Park, Beechwater and Meadow;
- Brazier's Wood, Pond Alder Carr and Meadows; and
- Christchurch Park including Arboretum.

## Population

**3.10** In 2021, Ipswich Borough's population was 139,600 which was a 4.7% increase since 2011, below the average for both England and the East of England which saw an increase of 6.6% and 8.3% respectively over the same time period [See reference 23]. By 2024, the population had slightly increased further to 140,274 [See reference 24]. Ipswich Borough had a density of around 25.2 people per football-pitch sized piece of land in 2021, which is the highest density of all districts and boroughs in Suffolk [See reference 25]. As of 2024, the population of Ipswich Borough comprised 49.7% men (69,697) and 50.3% women (70,577) [See reference 26].

**3.11** According to the 2021 Census, the population of Ipswich Borough had an average age of 38 years, which is lower than both the national average at 40 years of age and the East of England average at 41 years of age. There is a higher proportion of younger people than nationally and a lower proportion of older people. The under 15 age group accounts for 20% of the population of the Borough compared with 18.5% nationally.

**3.12** According to the 2021 Census, the largest ethnic group in Ipswich Borough identified as "White", while 5.5% identified as "Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh". In 2021, 2.1% of Ipswich residents identified their ethnic group as "Other", up from 0.9% in 2011. The 1.3 percentage-point change was the largest increase among high-level ethnic groups in the area. **Table 3.3** below shows the breakdown of Ipswich Borough's population by ethnic group [See [reference 27](#)].

**Table 3.3: Ipswich Borough population by ethnic group**

Ethnic group	% of population
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh	5.5
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African	3.5
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	4.6
White	84.3
Other ethnic groups	2.1

**3.13** In Ipswich Borough, the percentage of households including a couple with dependent children has not significantly changed from 19.6% in 2011 to 19.4% in 2021. The percentage of households including a couple without children in Ipswich Borough fell from 17.9 to 16.4%, while the percentage of households including a couple with only non-dependent children stayed the same at 5.6%.

**3.14** The population in Ipswich Borough is spread across 16 wards. In 2024, Alexandra was estimated as the ward with the highest population, being in the 10,000s [See [reference 28](#)]. **Table 3.4** below presents the population change between 2011 and 2021 by ward in Ipswich Borough. The table shows that the majority of wards have experienced population increase. Castle Hill was the

only ward to experience population decrease, but this was minimal. Bridge was the ward which experienced the highest population increase with an additional 1,208 people moving into the ward between 2011 and 2021.

**Table 3.4: Estimated population by ward in Ipswich Borough**

Ward	Population in 2011	Population in 2021	Population change (%)
Alexandra	9,700	10,692	10.22
Bixley	7,055	7,449	5.58
Bridge	8,632	9,840	13.98
Castle Hill	7,463	7,432	-0.42
Gainsborough	8,792	8,847	0.63
Gipping	8,826	9,397	6.47
Holywells	7,799	8,121	4.13
Priory Heath	8,991	9,651	7.34
Rushmere	8,324	8,481	1.89
Sprites	6,660	6,776	1.74
St John's	9,134	9,700	6.20
St Margaret's	7,876	8,388	6.51
Stoke Park	7,276	7,279	0.04
Westgate	9,938	10,199	2.63
Whitehouse	8,879	9,104	2.54
Whitton	8,039	8,286	3.07

## Housing

**3.15** At the local level, housing affordability improved in two-thirds of local authorities in England and Wales since 2024. Average house prices increased in 65% of local authority areas in England and Wales, while average earnings increased in 78% of local authorities in 2025.

**3.16** The housing affordability ratio is defined as housing affordability estimates calculated by dividing house prices by annual earnings to create a ratio. It can be used to compare affordability over time and between areas. A larger number reflects a less affordable area. In 2025, it was estimated by the Office for National Statistics that full-time employees could typically expect to spend around 7.6 times their workplace-based annual earnings (£39,300) on purchasing a home in England. This is a slight decrease compared with 2024, when it was 7.7 times their workplace-based annual earnings [See reference 29]. In Ipswich Borough, the housing affordability ratio was 6.64 in 2025 which has decreased in recent years, down from 7.95 in 2021 [See reference 30]. The average house price for a property in Ipswich Borough as of November 2025 was £225,005 which is lower than both the regional average (£289,197) and national average (£293,000) [See reference 31].

**3.17** In Ipswich Borough, the percentage of households in the social rented sector fell from 21.6% in 2011 to 20.8% in 2021, while across England it fell from 17.7% to 17.1%. During the same period, the regional percentage fell from 15.7% to 15.5%. Private renting in Ipswich Borough increased from 19.9% to 23.0%, while the rate of home ownership decreased from 56.7% to 55.4% [See reference 32].

**3.18** Housing completions in 2024/25 totalled 275 dwellings, which was below the stepped housing requirement of 540 dwellings per annum according to the adopted Local Plan Review (2022) [See reference 33]. The Council published an updated Housing Delivery Action Plan in 2025 which included 'Root Cause Analysis' to identify the main local issues and challenges influencing delivery rates. The main barriers included the tight, compact urban nature of the Borough, the reliance on brownfield sites and low private sector delivery levels of affordable housing [See reference 34].

## Education

**3.19** In Suffolk, there are 295 schools – 252 of which are primary (85%) and 43 of which are secondary (15%). 29 of the primary schools (12%) and 5 of the secondary schools (12%) are over capacity. In total, there are 17,644 unfilled

places in Suffolk. Ipswich Borough contains 22 primary schools in total and is served by six secondary schools. Once data are available on the capacity of schools within Ipswich Borough, the report will be updated to reflect this.

**3.20** Between January and December 2025, approximately 25.9% of the population of Ipswich had a Level 4 qualification and above. This is significantly lower than the regional figure for the East of England at 44.2% and the national figure for Great Britain at 48.6%. During the same period, 10.3% of the population in the Borough also had no qualifications, higher than both the regional and national figures at 4.7% and 6.3% respectively [\[See reference 35\]](#).

## Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

**3.21** Policy CS11 in the adopted Core Strategy and Policies Development Plan Document Review (2022) indicates that provision will be made within Ipswich Borough for 13 permanent pitches to 2036, in addition to setting out criteria to guide planning applications for sites. A Gypsy, Traveller, Travelling Showpeople and Boat Dwellers Accommodation Needs Assessment (ANA) [\[See reference 36\]](#) was completed in 2017 and was updated to reflect changes in need and provision in 2020 through the production of a Topic Paper [\[See reference 37\]](#). According to this work, the additional need between 2016 and 2036 is 27 pitches. No specific needs were identified for Travelling Showpeople or boat dwellers. The five year estimates are broken down in **Table 3.5**.

**Table 3.5: 20 year estimate of the need for permanent/residential site pitches (2016-2036)**

Year	Additional need estimate
Additional need 2016-2021	13
Additional need 2021–2026	4
Additional need 2026–2031	5
Additional need 2031–2036	5

**3.22** A lack of transit provision was identified by families as being a key issue, as some permanent sites are too large and there is generally a need for more

sites to be made available. Families spoke of how small family sites work better and these are the type of sites families primarily want. They spoke of how they feel safer on smaller sites, and how they are easier to manage and maintain. They also commented on how smaller sites are more accepted by the local settled community and lead to better integration.

**3.23** The Suffolk local planning authorities have jointly commissioned an updated Gypsy, Traveller, Travelling Showpeople and Boat Dwellers Accommodation Needs Assessment. Once this work is available, this SEA will be updated to reflect it.

## Human health

### Health

**3.24** Health is a cross-cutting topic and as such many topic areas explored in this Scoping Report influence health either directly or indirectly. In the 2021 Census, 43.4% of the population of Ipswich Borough identified themselves as being in very good health and 5.5% in bad health or very bad health [**See reference 38**]. Approximately 7.8% of people in Ipswich Borough were identified as disabled under the Equality Act where their day-to-day activities are limited a lot.

**3.25** Health statistics for Ipswich Borough are shown in **Table 3.6** below [**See reference 39**]:

**Table 3.6: Health in Ipswich Borough****Domain: Infants and children's health**

Indicator	Ipswich Borough (%)	England (%)
Under 18 conception rate per 1,000 females (2017)	29.0	17.8
Infant Mortality Rate (2016-2018)	3.06	3.93
Year 6: Prevalence of obesity (2018-2019)	20.8	20.2

**Domain: Adults' health and lifestyle**

Indicator	Ipswich Borough (%)	England (%)
Adults smoking (2018/19)	17.1	14.4
Physically active adults (2017/18)	67.5	66.3
Obese adults (2017/18)	68.4	62

**Domain: Diseases and poor health**

Indicator	Ipswich Borough (%)	England (%)
Under 75 mortality rate from all causes (2016/18)	352.3	330.5
Under 75 mortality rate from all cardiovascular diseases (2016-18)	83.1	71.7
Under 75 mortality rate from cancer (2016-18)	142.4	132.3
Admission episodes for alcohol-related conditions (2021-22)	635.3	663.7

**3.26** Figure 3.2 shows the distribution of GP surgeries and pharmacies in Ipswich Borough, in addition to Ipswich Hospital located in the east of the Borough. The GP surgeries and pharmacies are spread relatively evenly across the Borough and although there is a gap in provision in the north east of the Borough towards Westerfield, located just outside of the Borough, this area is rural in character with little built development.

**3.27** In Ipswich Borough, inequalities in dental health are present [See reference 40]. There are 24 dentists accepting NHS patients across Ipswich Borough, serving a population of 139,300 – roughly one dentist per 5,572 people [See reference 41].

### Life expectancy

**3.28** The average life expectancy at birth in 2022 to 2024 for Ipswich Borough residents was 79.2 years for males and 83.0 years for females. This is lower than the regional average of 80.3 years for males and 84.0 years for females and the England average of 79.5 years for males and 83.3 years for females [See reference 42].

### Obesity and physical activity levels

**3.29** Being overweight or obese carries numerous health risks, including increased likelihood of type 2 diabetes, cancer, heart and liver disease, stroke and related mental health conditions. It is estimated this health issue places a cost of at least £5.1 billion on the NHS and tens of billions on the wider UK society every year.

**3.30** In Ipswich Borough, 68.4% of adults are obese which is above the national average of 62%. 20.8% of year 6 children are obese which is close to the national average 20.2% [See reference 43].

**3.31** In 2024/25, Sport England conducted surveys that focussed on understanding Ipswich Borough's engagement in sport. The survey required respondents to identify if they were 'active' (at least 150 minutes of physical activity per week), 'fairly active' (an average of 30-149 minutes of physical activity per week) or 'inactive' (30 minutes or less of physical activity per week) [See reference 44]. In Ipswich Borough, 61.3% of adults were physically active which is below the national average of 64.6%. The results of the survey are shown in Table 3.7 below.

**Table 3.7: Sport England physical activity levels survey**

Area	Active (%)	Fairly active (%)	Inactive (%)
Ipswich Borough	61.3	11.18	26.9
East of England	63.9	11.6	24.5
England	64.6	10.7	24.7

### Perceptions of well-being

**3.32** Residents of Ipswich Borough reported having slightly higher levels of life satisfaction (7.62 out of 10.00) than the average for the UK (7.45) in the 2022/23 period. However, average figures recorded for ‘feeling the things done in life are worthwhile’ were lower than the UK (7.93 and 8.16, respectively), with ‘happiness’ in Ipswich Borough also lower than the UK (7.21 and 7.39, respectively). Levels of high anxiety were recorded at 3.09 for Ipswich Borough in this period, a decrease of 0.13 from the previous period (2020/2021), and lower than both the national average (3.24) and regional average (3.20) **[See reference 45]**.

### Open space

**3.33** Parks and open spaces are important to the community they serve. They benefit local communities and provide meeting and social spaces, health and wellbeing benefits, climate cooling and increasing the appearance and profitability of an area. Open spaces provide opportunities for outdoor exercise and offer the opportunity to help increase levels of health and reduce obesity. They also help to maintain good mental health and reduce stress by encouraging relaxation through interactions with the natural environment.

**3.34** Despite the urban nature of Ipswich Borough, the Borough contains over 518 hectares of open spaces, sport and recreation facilities. The south of Ipswich Borough, in quantitative terms, is better provided with public open space, sport and recreation facilities than the north **[See reference 46]**. There are currently 93 play areas and 16 allotment sites which are managed by the Council **[See reference 47]**.

**3.35** The largest town park in Ipswich Borough is Chantry Park, which is on the western edge of the town. Historic England has included the park on its 'Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England' [See reference 48]. Historic England considers such parks to make a significant contribution to the richness of the local scene in terms of green space and nature conservation.

## Deprivation

**3.36** The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) uses Lower layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) to measure deprivation at local authority and county level. The seven distinct domains of deprivation (income; employment; health; education; crime; barriers to housing and services; and living environment) which when weighted and combined to form the IMD 2025 have been mapped for the Borough (see **Figure 3.3**).

**3.37** The IMD is one way to monitor and assess the health and wellbeing of communities. New datasets, methodologies and geographies have been used to produce the IMD 2025, meaning that the latest outputs are less directly comparable to previous indices.

**3.38** The IMD data for Ipswich Borough shows that its deprivation ranking is currently 84 out of 296 authorities. Ipswich Borough was the only one of Suffolk's district/borough authority areas to become relatively less deprived in terms of ranking but remains the most relatively deprived district/borough in Suffolk [See reference 49]. Relative deprivation levels are extremely varied within the Borough, with 14.9% of the population living in areas ranked among the least deprived fifth in England, and 30.9% living in areas ranked among the most deprived fifth in England [See reference 50]. Seven of the Borough's County Electoral Divisions contain neighbourhoods ranked among the most deprived 20% in England, these are:

- Bridge;
- Chantry;
- Gainsborough;
- Priory Heath;
- St Helen's;
- St Margaret's and Westgate; and
- Whitehouse and Whitton.

**3.39** Over half of the Borough is ranked among the least deprived 40% of areas in England for barriers to housing and services. All divisions within the Borough, with the exception of Bridge, contain LSOA's that are ranked among the least deprived in England for barriers to housing and services [See reference 51]. The domain for barriers to housing and services includes indicators of geographical barriers (distance to amenities), housing affordability and household overcrowding.

## Soils

**3.40** The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) [See reference 52] provides a framework for classifying land according to the extent to which its physical or chemical characteristics impose long-term limitations to agricultural use. The principal factors influencing agricultural production are soil wetness, drought and erosion. These factors, together with interactions between them, form the basis for classifying land use into one of five grades, where 1 describes land as excellent (land of high agricultural quality and potential) and 5 describes land as very poor (land of low agricultural quality and potential). Land falling outside these scores is deemed to be 'primarily in non-agricultural use', or 'predominantly in urban use'. Grade 3 can be further separated into grades 3a and 3b. Grades 1, 2 and 3a are considered to be the best and most versatile agricultural land.

**3.41** The majority of land in Ipswich Borough is urban. However, land surrounding the built-up area is predominantly Grade 2, 3a and 3b agricultural land [See reference 53]. This is shown in **Figure 3.4**.

## Contaminated land

**3.42** Under Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, Ipswich Borough Council is responsible for regulating contaminated land. This requires surveying Ipswich Borough, determining contaminated land, ensuring a solution is found, and identifying who should bear the costs of the solution.

**3.43** In accordance with Section 78R of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, the Council is also required to maintain a public register of contaminated land, which serves as a permanent record of all regulatory action undertaken to ensure remediation of any site that has been classified as contaminated. There are currently no entries on the public register. However, the Council has identified approximately 254 sites as potentially being contaminated that require further investigation [See reference 54].

**3.44** The definition of contaminated land from Part IIA Environmental Protection Act 1990 (as amended), Section 78A is: "any land which appears to the local authority in whose area it is situated to be in such a condition, by reason of substances in, on or under the land, that:

- significant harm is being caused or there is a significant possibility of such harm being caused; or
- significant pollution of controlled waters is being, or is likely to be, caused".

**3.45** Local authorities are required to take a strategic approach in inspecting their area and are required to publish this as a part of a written strategy. Ipswich Borough Council's latest strategy update took place in 2024 and is still in the process of being implemented. However, it has not significantly changed from the 2019 version.

## Geology and minerals

**3.46** The majority of the Borough is situated over glacial sand, Kesgrave sand and gravel, which sits above London Clay along with small pockets of brick earth to the east of Ipswich Borough [\[See reference 55\]](#). The Suffolk Minerals and Waste Local Plan found no sites in the Borough for mineral extraction [\[See reference 56\]](#).

## Brownfield land

**3.47** The Council has a duty to prepare, maintain and publish a Brownfield Land Register. Ipswich Borough Council publishes the register in two parts. Part One is a list of previously developed land which is suitable, available and achievable for residential development, while Part Two is an optional list and allows the Council to select sites from Part One and grant permission in principle (PiP) for housing-led development. As of 2026, there are a total of 128 sites on the Brownfield Register. However, not all of these sites are deliverable and nor have they been granted planning permission. The Council reviews the register at least once a year [\[See reference 57\]](#).

## Water

### Water

Ipswich Borough is located within the Anglian River Basin District, which is prone to drought and within a water stressed area. The management and operational catchment within the Basin are the East Suffolk Catchment and the Gipping Operational Catchment. There are 12 water bodies in this catchment, the key ones for Ipswich Borough include: Gipping; Belstead Brook; and the Orwell Estuary [See reference 58]. This can be seen in **Figure 3.5**

**3.48 Figure 3.5** which shows the watercourses in Ipswich Borough.

**3.49** The River Gipping runs through the western section of Ipswich Borough, flowing from Stowmarket before becoming the River Orwell in the town centre and widening into the estuary [See reference 59]. River levels across East Anglia in 2025 were at some of the lowest levels recorded since 1976 [See reference 60].

**3.50** The region experienced exceptionally low rainfall in April 2025 across all East Anglian catchments, along with groundwater levels starting to decrease at almost all monitoring sites [See reference 61]. Water resources are still secure, however recent hot and dry weather has resulted in the Anglian region experiencing below normal levels [See reference 62].

**3.51** Source Protection Zones (SPZs) are defined around large and public potable groundwater abstraction sites, and they provide additional protection to safeguard drinking water quality by constraining the proximity of an activity that can impact the quality of drinking water. There is one Inner Protection Zone in Ipswich Borough located in the south west part of the Borough, which is defined as the area closest to a drinking water borehole or well where pollution presents the highest risk [See reference 63].

**3.52** Anglian Water is the water authority responsible for the public water supply in Ipswich Borough, and it carries out tests to ensure the public water supply meets the required standards and provide reports on it [See reference 64].

**3.53** Anglian Water published its Water Resources Management Plan 2024 (WRMP24) in April 2025 [See reference 65]. The plan identifies main challenges of license capping, reducing the amount of water taken from sensitive environments, enhanced resilience to drought and adapting to climate change. The intended outcomes of the plan include:

- supply meets demand;
- positive impact on communities;
- resilient businesses;
- investing for tomorrow;
- flourishing environment;
- a smaller footprint; and
- fair charges, fair returns.

## Flood risk

**3.54** Ipswich Borough has historically been at risk of flooding as the town is located where River Gipping becomes the River Orwell [\[See reference 66\]](#). While most of Ipswich Borough falls within Flood Zone 1, there are areas along the River Orwell and River Gipping that fall into Flood Zone 2 and 3 [\[See reference 67\]](#). This is shown in **Figure 3.6**. In response to the tidal flood risk, the Ipswich Tidal Barrier was commissioned in 2018 to protect the town from North Sea tidal storm surges. Over 2,400 homes and 300 businesses are protected by the Barrier, alongside 1km of robust steel sheet piled floodwalls, seven floodgates, and two wet lock floodgates [\[See reference 68\]](#).

**3.55** The Borough is also at risk of flooding from surface water runoff and exceedance of the local drainage network. Recent flash flooding events have highlighted the need for improvements on the Borough's surface drainage infrastructure. Ipswich Borough undertook a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2020 which stated that in areas close to the tidal estuary, surface water may not be able to drain away during high tide conditions [\[See reference 69\]](#). Those considered to be at greatest risk included:

- Swinburne Road;
- Norwich Road;
- Monton Rise;
- Bridgewater Road;
- Ellenbrook Road;
- Bixley Rd;
- Holywells Rd;

- Duke Street; and
- Maidenhall.

## Air

### Air quality

**3.56** Air pollution is associated with a number of adverse health impacts. It is recognised as a contributing factor in the onset of heart disease and cancer. Additionally, air pollution particularly affects the most vulnerable in society: children, the elderly, and those with existing heart and lung conditions. There is also often a strong correlation with equalities issues because areas with poor air quality are also often less affluent areas.

**3.57** There is an obligation on all local authorities under Part IV of the 1995 Environment Act to review regularly and assess air quality in their areas and to determine whether or not national air quality objectives are likely to be achieved. Where exceedances are considered likely, the local authority must declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and prepare an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) setting out the measures it intends to put in place in pursuit of required air quality improvements.

**3.58** There are currently three AQMAs within Ipswich Borough [[See reference 70](#)]:

- Ipswich AQMA No. 2: from the junction with Peel Street, extending along Crown Street, St Margarets Street and St Helens Street to the junction with Palmerston Road, and from St Margarets Street extending up Woodbridge Road to just beyond the junction with Argyle Street (declared 2006; amended 2017).
- Ipswich AQMA No. 3: encompassing the land in and around College Street, Key Street, Salthouse Street, Fore Street, Star Lane, Neptune Square and Grimwade Street (declared 2006; amended in 2017 and 2021).
- Ipswich AQMA No. 5: incorporating the land in or around St. Matthews Street/Norwich Road between the Civic Drive roundabout and Bramford Road (declared 2017).

**3.59** The Council's recently published Air Quality Action Plan 2025-2030 states that nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) is the pollutant of concern within the Borough,

predominately from road traffic. The three AQMAs in Ipswich Borough are in areas of generally higher levels of deprivation, with homes more likely to be in poor condition internally which could impact on indoor air quality [\[See reference 71\]](#).

## Climate change adaptation and mitigation

### Climate change

**3.60** Climate change presents a global risk, with a range of different social, economic and environmental impacts that are likely to be felt within Ipswich Borough across numerous receptors. A key challenge in protecting the environment will be to tackle the causes and consequences of climate change. The consequences include predictions of warmer, drier summers and wetter winters with more severe weather events all year as well resulting in higher sea levels and increased river flooding. A strong reaction is required from planning to ensure appropriate action can be taken to help species and habitats adapt and to enable the agricultural sector to continue to deliver diverse, affordable and good quality produce.

**3.61** There has been a general trend towards warmer average temperatures in recent years and 2025 became the UK's warmest year on record, with a mean temperature of 10.09°C. Four of the UK's last five years appear in the top five warmest years since 1884 and all of the top ten warmest years will now have occurred in the last two decades [\[See reference 72\]](#).

**3.62** As a mostly urban Borough, Ipswich Borough is likely to experience the urban heat island effect. The nearest UK climate station to Ipswich Borough, Levington, found its annual yearly average temperature from 1991-2020 to be 14.65°C which was slightly above the regional average (14.36°C) over the same period of time and higher than the UK average (12.79°C) [\[See reference 73\]](#).

**3.63** Heavy rainfall and flooding events have been demonstrated to have increased potential to occur in the UK as the climate has generally become wetter. For example, for the most recent decade (2015-2024), UK winter half-years (October to March) have been on average 6% wetter than 1991-2020 and 16% wetter than 1961-1990 compared to little change for summer half-years [\[See reference 74\]](#).

**3.64** The IPCC AR6 Synthesis Report (2023) highlights that greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are predicted to continue into 2030 making it likely that global warming will exceed 1.5°C, which in turn means that GHG emissions will become harder to maintain below 2°C. As a result of this, increased global warming will occur and elicit climate hazards such as increased incidences of heatwaves, droughts, increased global monsoon precipitation, tropical storms, very wet and very dry weather. Our natural land and ocean carbon sinks will become less effective, sea levels will rise, become more acidic and experience deoxygenation amongst other climate events [\[See reference 75\]](#). The Paris Agreement is a legally binding international treaty involving 196 parties. The overarching goal of this agreement is to limit global warming increasing to 1.5°C by the end of the century. Achieving this goal still requires a lot of action but since 2016 when the agreement was established, low-carbon solutions and new markets for climate resilience have been sparked.

**3.65** Ipswich Borough Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and resolved to start working towards becoming carbon neutral by 2030. In 2020, the Council released a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan covering its approach to reducing emissions from the Council's own land, buildings, fleet and assets [\[See reference 76\]](#).

## Carbon dioxide emissions

**3.66** The Government regularly publishes Local Authority and regional carbon dioxide emissions national statistics. Emissions for Ipswich Borough between 2005-2023 have fallen from 6.0 tonnes per capita to 2.3 tonnes per capita [\[See reference 77\]](#). Per capita emissions in the plan area within the scope of influence of the local authority fell almost every year between 2005 and 2023, except from 2009-2010, 2011-2012 and 2020-2021 where the per capita emissions rose and 2017-2018 where the per capita emissions stayed the same. This is shown in **Table 3.8**.

**Table 3.8: Carbon dioxide emissions estimates in Ipswich Borough**

Year	Total emissions (kt)	Per capita emissions (tCO <sub>2</sub> e)
2005	746.0	6.0
2006	732.9	5.9

Year	Total emissions (kt)	Per capita emissions (tCO <sub>2</sub> e)
2007	705.3	5.6
2008	689.2	5.4
2009	627.5	4.9
2010	653.8	5.0
2011	580.6	4.3
2012	606.4	4.5
2013	590.4	4.3
2014	513.0	3.7
2015	488.4	3.5
2016	449.4	3.2
2017	432.5	3.0
2018	419.2	3.0
2019	391.1	2.8
2020	357.5	2.6
2021	375.6	2.7
2022	341.9	2.5
2023	321.2	2.3

**3.67** Figure 3.7 shows the per capita CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of Ipswich Borough compared to neighbouring authorities. In Ipswich Borough, the main contributor of emissions was from domestic and transport. However, between 2005 and 2023, the levels of emissions from domestic and transport have dropped

significantly for Ipswich Borough, by 54.96% and 27.4%, respectively. This is shown in **Table 3.9**.

**Table 3.9: Changes in carbon dioxide emissions by sector for Ipswich Borough**

Source of emissions	2005	2023
Industry	53.5	18.6
Commercial	196.2	42.2
Public Sector	58.8	21.7
Domestic	283.5	127.7
Transport	149.9	108.8
Land Use, Land-Use Change, and Forestry	2.1	1.5
Agriculture	1.9	0.6
Waste	0.1	0
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>746.0</b>	<b>321.2</b>

## Overall energy consumption

**3.68** The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy produced the following consumption figures for Ipswich Borough in 2023. These figures are presented as kilotonnes of oil equivalent (Ktoe).

- All fuels: a total of 144.8 Ktoe across domestic, transport and industrial and commercial use.
- Coal: a total of 0.6 Ktoe predominantly through industrial and domestic use.
- Manufactured fuels: a total of 0.6 Ktoe through domestic and industrial and commercial use.

- Petroleum: a total of 41.2 Ktoe predominantly from road transport.
- Gas: a total of 61.1 Ktoe predominantly through domestic use.
- Electricity: a total of 34.5 Ktoe through domestic and industrial and commercial use.
- Bioenergy and wastes: a total of 6.8 Ktoe predominantly through road and transport.

**3.69 Table 3.10** below highlights the energy consumption for Ipswich Borough between 2005 to 2023 by type. With the exception of energy from bioenergy and wastes and manufactured fuels, the consumption of coal, manufactured fuels, petroleum, gas and electricity fell between 2005 and 2023 [\[See reference 78\]](#).

**Table 3.10: Energy consumption in Ipswich Borough by type**

Energy type	Energy consumption in Ktoe (2005)	Energy consumption in Ktoe (2023)
Coal	1.3	0.6
Manufactured Fuels	0.6	0.6
Petroleum	54.7	41.2
Gas	94.5	61.1
Electricity	58.3	34.5
Bioenergy and Wastes	3.5	6.8
Total	212.9	144.8

## Renewable energy

**3.70** Renewable energy is recognised as an important contributor to reducing reliance on fossil fuels and adapting to climate change. Within the East of England, there was a total of 196,747 sites that were capable of generating renewable energy across wind, solar, wave, hydro and biomass renewable sources in 2024. This represents 12% of all the sites within the UK that

generate renewable energy. In 2024, the East of England generated a total of 16,022 gigawatt hours (GWh) of renewable energy. This is a 757% increase in renewable energy generation since 2011.

**3.71** In 2024, a total of 3,592 photovoltaic panels were installed in Ipswich Borough, along with three individual installations for sewage gas, landfill gas and plant biomass. This is an increase on 2014 when 1,076 photovoltaic panels and no plant biomass were installed [\[See reference 79\]](#).

**3.72** Since 2021, Suffolk's public sector organisations have collaborated to reduce emissions across the county through Sustainable Suffolk and have jointly published a Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan. The Suffolk Climate Tracker was set up to graph metrics relating to each of the key themes within the Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan which cover sustainable homes; low carbon transport; industrial and commercial energy use; and cleaner power [\[See reference 80\]](#). In addition, a recent progress overview of the plan states that £9.8 million of funding was recently secured to commercialise a potential heat network in Ipswich, with construction aimed to commence in 2027/2028 [\[See reference 81\]](#).

## Material assets

### Economy

**3.73** The percentage of people in Ipswich Borough who were in employment between January 2025 and December 2025 was 74.4%, which is below the averages for the East of England (78.4%) and Great Britain as a whole (75.5%). There was an increase in the number of people claiming unemployment related benefits in Ipswich Borough from 4.4% in April 2025 to 4.5% in April 2026. As of April 2026, 3,930 people between the ages of 16 and 64 were on universal credit in Ipswich Borough. This equates to 9% of people (2024 population) aged 16-64. The number of claimants is above the regional and national figures at 3.3% and 4.0% respectively [\[See reference 82\]](#).

**3.74** In 2023, the total output (Gross Value Added, GVA) in Ipswich Borough reached £5,423 million. The trend in GVA has been steadily increasing over the years for Ipswich Borough, with decreases from 2008-2009, 2010-2012 and 2021-2022 [\[See reference 83\]](#).

**3.75** The Gross Weekly Pay in 2025 in Ipswich Borough for full time workers was £691.30 per week for full time workers which is lower than the regional

average (£804.90) and the national average (£766.60). This equates to £35,947.60 a year in Ipswich Borough compared with £41,854.80 and £39,863.20 regionally and nationally [\[See reference 84\]](#).

**3.76** In the period from January 2025 to December 2025, 75.9% of people in Ipswich Borough were economically active. Across the East England region this figure was higher at 81.8% within the same period [\[See reference 85\]](#). Ipswich Borough's workforce is distributed across a wide range of sectors, with only 32.2% of the working population employed as a manager, director, senior role, professional occupation or associate professional occupation compared to the East of England (53.4%) and Great Britain (53.6%) averages [\[See reference 86\]](#).

**3.77** Official Labour Market Statistics (2024) data presented in **Table 3.11** below show that in Ipswich Borough, 18.1% of people work in Human health and social work activities which is higher than the regional average of 12.7% and the national average of 14.2%. Similarly, 5.6% of people work in Financial and insurance activities which is higher than the regional average (1.8%) and national average (3.4%), 2.1% work in Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply compared to the regional average (0.3%) and national average (0.4%), and 3.5% of people work in arts, entertainment and recreation which is higher than the regional average (2.4%) and national average (2.5%) [\[See reference 87\]](#).

**Table 3.11: Employee jobs in Ipswich Borough in relation to regional and national averages (2024)**

Employee jobs by industry	Ipswich Borough (%)	East England (%)	Great Britain (%)
Mining and Quarrying	0.1	0.1	0.2
Manufacturing	2.8	7.2	7.3
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	2.1	0.3	0.4
Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	0.3	0.7	0.7

<b>Employee jobs by industry</b>	<b>Ipswich Borough (%)</b>	<b>East England (%)</b>	<b>Great Britain (%)</b>
Construction	4.9	6.5	5
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	13.9	14.9	13.7
Transportation and storage	6.9	5.75	5
Accommodation and food service activities	5.6	7	7.8
Information and communication	1.7	3.2	4.5
Financial and insurance activities	5.6	1.8	3.4
Real estate activities	1.7	2.3	1.9
Professional, scientific and technical activities	4.9	8.7	9.3
Administrative and support service activities	9.7	11.7	8.6
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	8.3	3.8	4.9
Education	8.3	9.1	8.6
Human health and social work activities	18.1	12.7	14.25
Arts, entertainment and recreation	3.5	2.4	2.5
Other service activities	1.75	1.9	1.9

**3.78** In 2025 there were 4,650 businesses in Ipswich Borough. The majority of these (87.7% or 4,080) were micro businesses which have fewer than 10 staff. There were 430 (9.2%) small businesses, 105 (2.3%) medium and 30 (0.6%) large businesses in Ipswich Borough. In the year leading up to 2025, the number of businesses in Ipswich Borough decreased by 20 [\[See reference 88\]](#).

**3.79** The Borough's town centre contains a good variety of both national and independent traders; however, the overall proportion of vacant units was higher than the UK average in 2019, at 15% and 11%, respectively. This figure is likely to have changed since the COVID-19 pandemic and the changes in shopping habits [\[See reference 89\]](#).

## Transport

**3.80** There are two railway stations in Ipswich Borough, Ipswich Station and Derby Road (Ipswich) Station. Ipswich Station is the main railway station in the Borough and is on the InterCity main line to London and offers direct links to Colchester, Stratford, Bury St. Edmunds and Cambridge. Derby Road (Ipswich) Station is a smaller, unstaffed station on the Felixstowe branch line [\[See reference 90\]](#).

**3.81** Car ownership in Ipswich Borough is relatively low (75.2%) compared to neighbouring authorities Mid Suffolk (90.2%), Babergh (88.4%) and East Suffolk (84.1%) [\[See reference 91\]](#).

**3.82** In 2021, there was a slightly higher inflow of people commuting into Ipswich Borough (16,702 people) than commuting out (16,058 people). The vast majority of in and outflows of Ipswich Borough were to East Suffolk, Mid Suffolk and Babergh, summarised below in **Table 3.12** [\[See reference 92\]](#).

**Table 3.12: Inflows and outflows for Ipswich Borough**

Area	Inflow	Outflow
East Suffolk	6,577	6,234
Mid Suffolk	3,294	3,215
Babergh	2,907	3,112

**3.83** The transport networks within Ipswich Borough are shown in **Figure 3.8** and services and facilities in Ipswich Borough are shown in **Figure 3.2**.

## Waste

**3.84** Suffolk County Council acts as the Waste Disposal Authority, responsible for managing waste in Ipswich Borough. Ipswich Borough Council serves as the Waste Collection Authority and are responsible for collecting waste from their residents. The Borough implemented its new Recycling and Waste Service in June 2026 which included an expansion of the materials the Borough already collects and the provision of a new weekly food waste collection [**See reference 93**].

**3.85** There are currently two Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) serving Ipswich Borough, located at Portman's Walk and Foxhall, the latter of which is in East Suffolk. Suffolk County Council is delivering a new HWRC at the former Ipswich Borough Council depot just off Hadleigh Road, which will replace the existing recycling centre at Portman's Walk and provide significantly enhanced capacity and improved facilities for residents [**See reference 94**].

**3.86** Between 2024 to 2025, a total of 54,255 tonnes of waste was collected in Ipswich Borough, of which 50,422 of which was household waste. 33.5% of this household waste was sent to be recycled, composted or re-used resulting in 66.5% of waste not being recycled (33,523 out of 50,422). This is significantly lower than the regional average recycling rate of 44.9% for East England and the national recycling rate of 42% for England [**See reference 95**].

## Cultural heritage

**3.87** Ipswich has a range of unique assets that contribute to the character and distinctiveness of the area. These assets include:

- Conservation Areas;
- Historic Parks and Gardens;
- Listed buildings; and
- Scheduled Monuments.

**3.88** Some heritage assets, non-designated heritage assets, archaeological sites, historic buildings, parks, formal gardens or battlefields, are considered to be of national importance. Non-designated heritage assets include a list of local

heritage assets that do not meet the strict criteria for national designation but are of local importance. There are over 600 listed buildings and structures in Ipswich Borough, covering a wide variety of buildings from Medieval churches, Victorian residences to 1980's school buildings [\[See reference 96\]](#).

**3.89** Ipswich has 15 designated conservation areas, listed below [\[See reference 97\]](#):

- Barrack Corner Conservation Area;
- Burlington Road Conservation Area;
- Cemeteries Conservation Area;
- Central Conservation Area;
- Chantry Park Conservation Area;
- Christchurch Street Conservation Area;
- Henley Road Conservation Area;
- Holywells Park Conservation Area;
- Marlborough Road Conservation Area;
- Norwich Road/Anglesea Road Conservation Area;
- Park Conservation Area;
- St Helen's Conservation Area;
- Stoke Conservation Area;
- Wet Dock Conservation Area; and
- Whitton Conservation Area.

**3.90** Three sites are nationally listed as Registered Parks and Gardens:

- Chantry Park;
- Christchurch Mansion; and
- Old and New Cemetery.

**3.91** Ipswich Borough Council adopted a Local List of buildings in 2021 that are of local architectural or historic interest. The buildings and structures that are on the Local List are non-designated heritage assets and their setting, and although not statutorily listed, have been identified by the Council as having local interest [\[See reference 98\]](#).

**3.92** The designated heritage assets within Ipswich Borough can be seen in **Figure 3.9**.

## Heritage at Risk

**3.93** Historic England has a Heritage at Risk Register [\[See reference 99\]](#) which includes historic buildings, Grade II\* and Grade I listed buildings (Grade II listed buildings are only included for London), sites and Conservation Areas at risk of being lost through neglect, deterioration or decay. The register aims to highlight those places and buildings in greatest need of repair. Historic England classifies building conditions as 'very bad', 'poor', 'fair' or 'good'.

**3.94** Currently one building within the Borough is registered on the Heritage at Risk Register: Great White Horse Hotel, 43 Tavern Street, which is classed as being in 'poor' condition, and at immediate risk of further rapid deterioration or loss of fabric [\[See reference 100\]](#).

**3.95** Ipswich Borough Council also maintains its own local Ipswich Buildings at Risk Register, which currently contains five buildings. [\[See reference 101\]](#). The buildings and their condition are set out below:

- 1-5 College Street: Poor.
- St Michael's Church, Upper Orwell Street: Very Bad.
- County Hall, St Helen's Street: Poor.
- The Tolly Brewery, Cliff Quay: Poor.
- The Great White Horse Hotel: Poor.

## Historic Landscape Characterisation

**3.96** Historic England published Historic Landscape Characterisation guidance that sets out the methodology for identification and interpretation of the varying historic character within an area beyond individual heritage assets into Historic Landscape Characterisation types [\[See reference 102\]](#). The Historic Landscape Characterisation types present within Ipswich Borough include:

- Industry;
- Orchards Horticulture and Aquaculture;
- Recreation;

- Settlement;
- Unimproved land; and
- Woodland and Forestry.

## Landscape

**3.97** National Character Area (NCA) profiles created by Natural England are used to define the specific combination of landscape, geodiversity, biodiversity, history, culture and economic activity in an area. NCAs follow natural lines in the landscape instead of administrative boundaries.

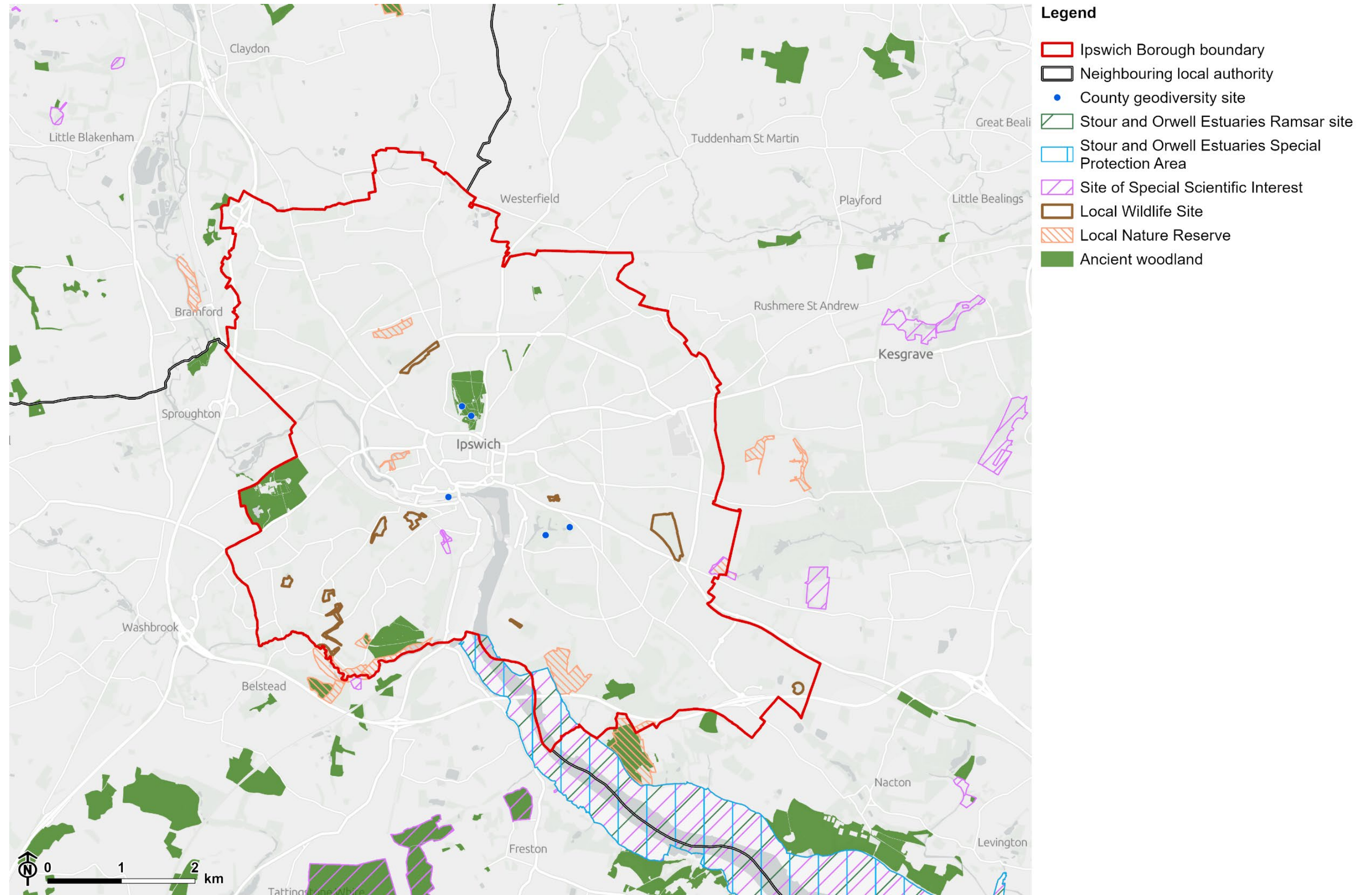
**3.98** Ipswich Borough falls within three NCAs listed below [\[See reference 103\]](#) (see **Figure 3.10**):

- South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland;
- Suffolk Coast and Heaths; and
- South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands.

**3.99** All three National Character Areas share a boundary with each other and are functionally linked through the underlying chalk aquifer which supplies the population of East Anglia. They all share a generally flat topography, with underlying bedrock geology of Late Cretaceous Chalk overlain by sand and gravel deposits as well as glacial tills [\[See reference 104\]](#). The boundary between the Suffolk Coast and Heaths and the more wooded boulder clay plateau of central East Anglia (South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands and South Suffolk and North Essex Claylands) is incised by several small east-west river valley corridors [\[See reference 105\]](#).

**3.100** The Suffolk Coast & Heaths National Landscape is mainly located to the south of Ipswich Borough, although a very small proportion of the National Landscape falls within the Borough, directly south of the Ransomes Industrial Estate.

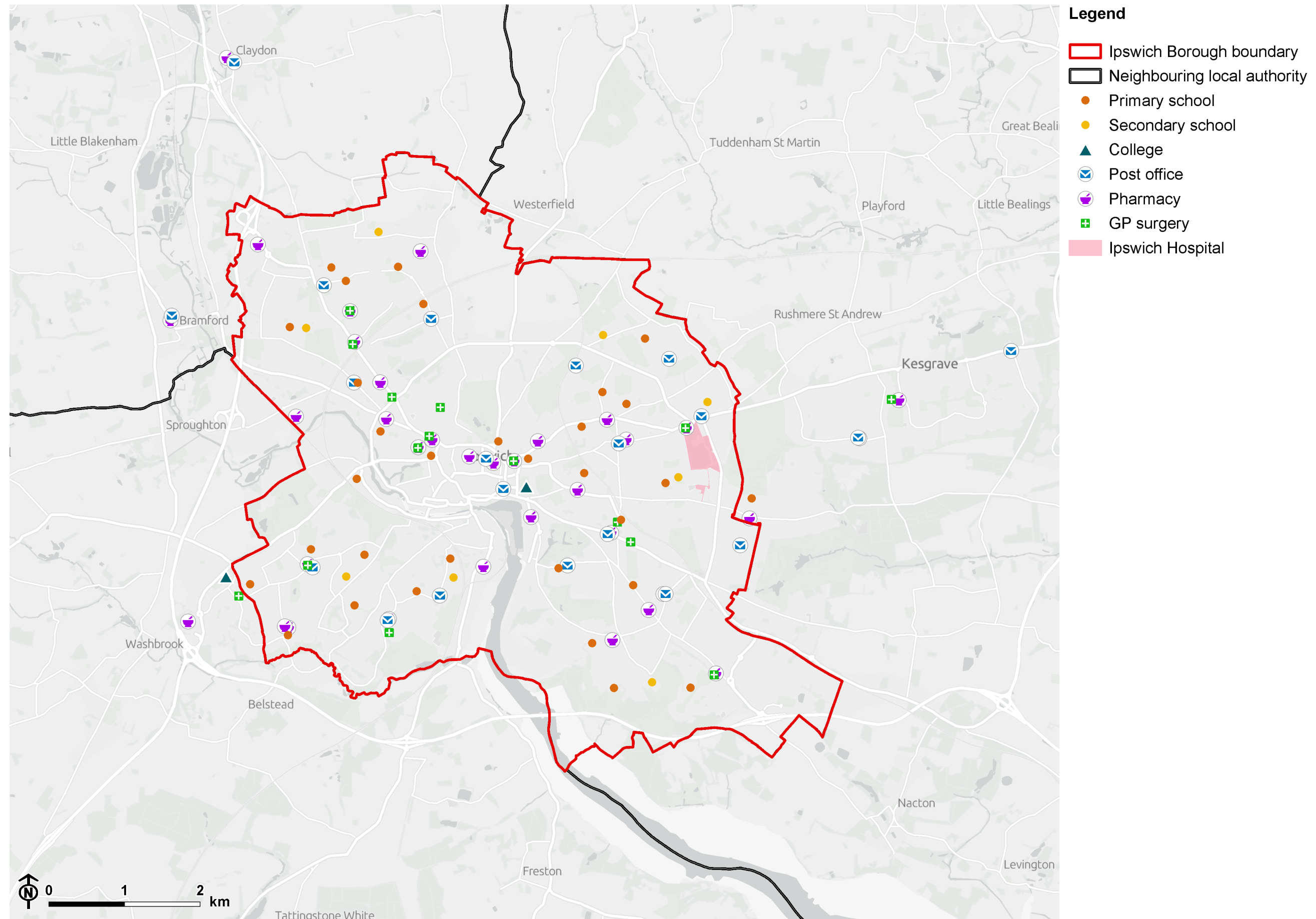
Figure 3.1: Biodiversity and geodiversity assets



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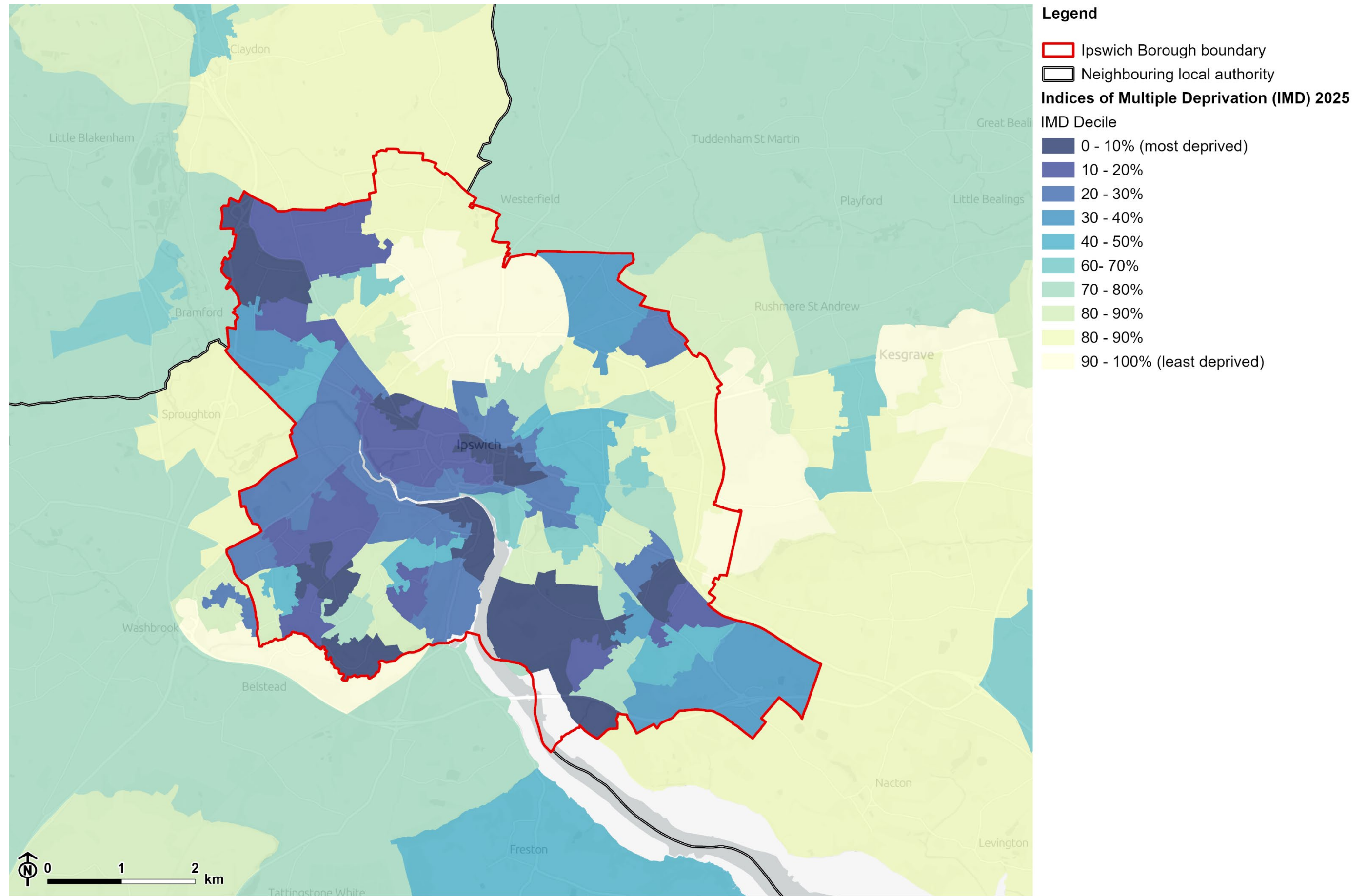
Figure 3.2: Services and facilities



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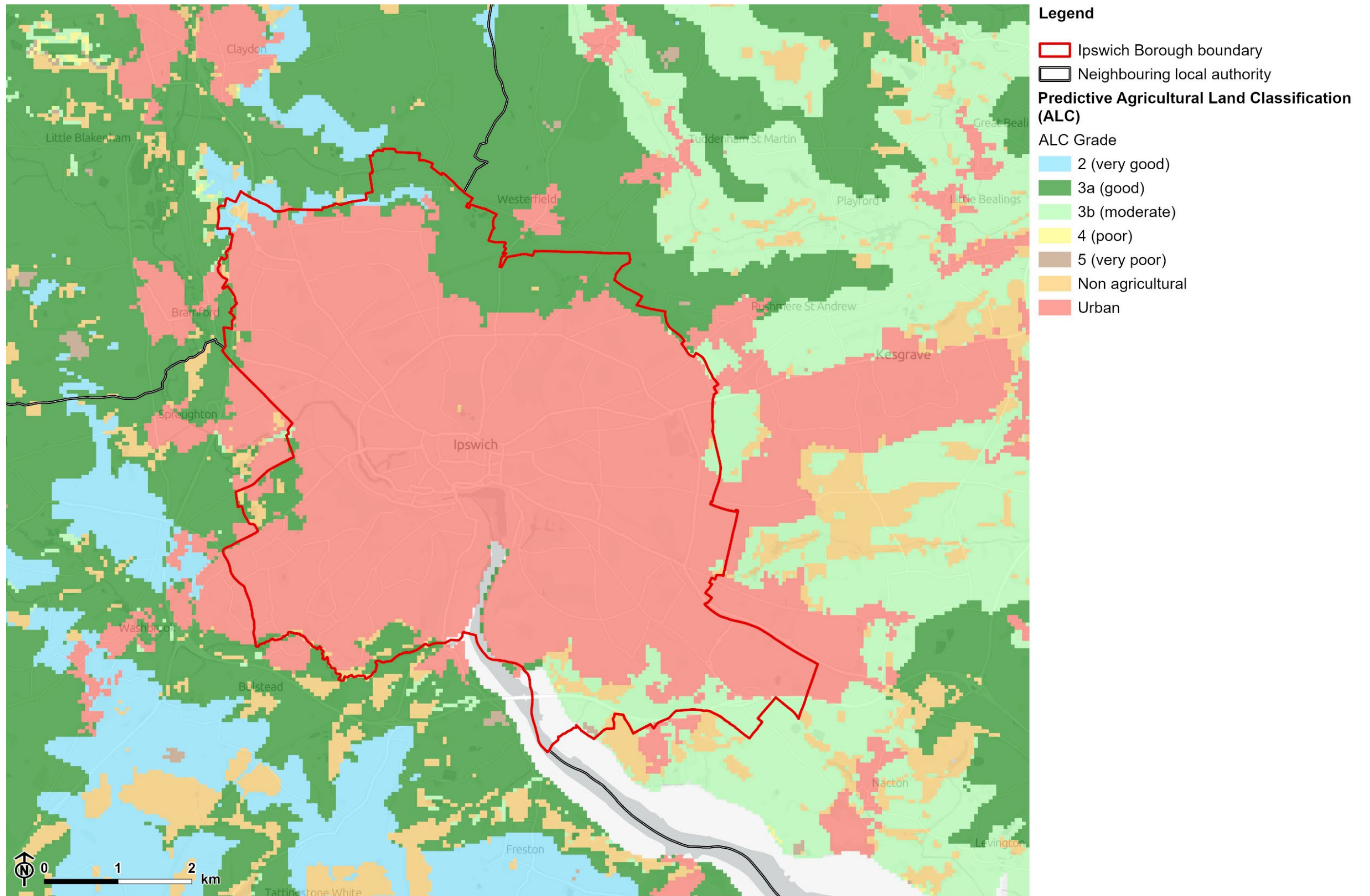
Figure 3.3: Indices of Multiple Deprivation



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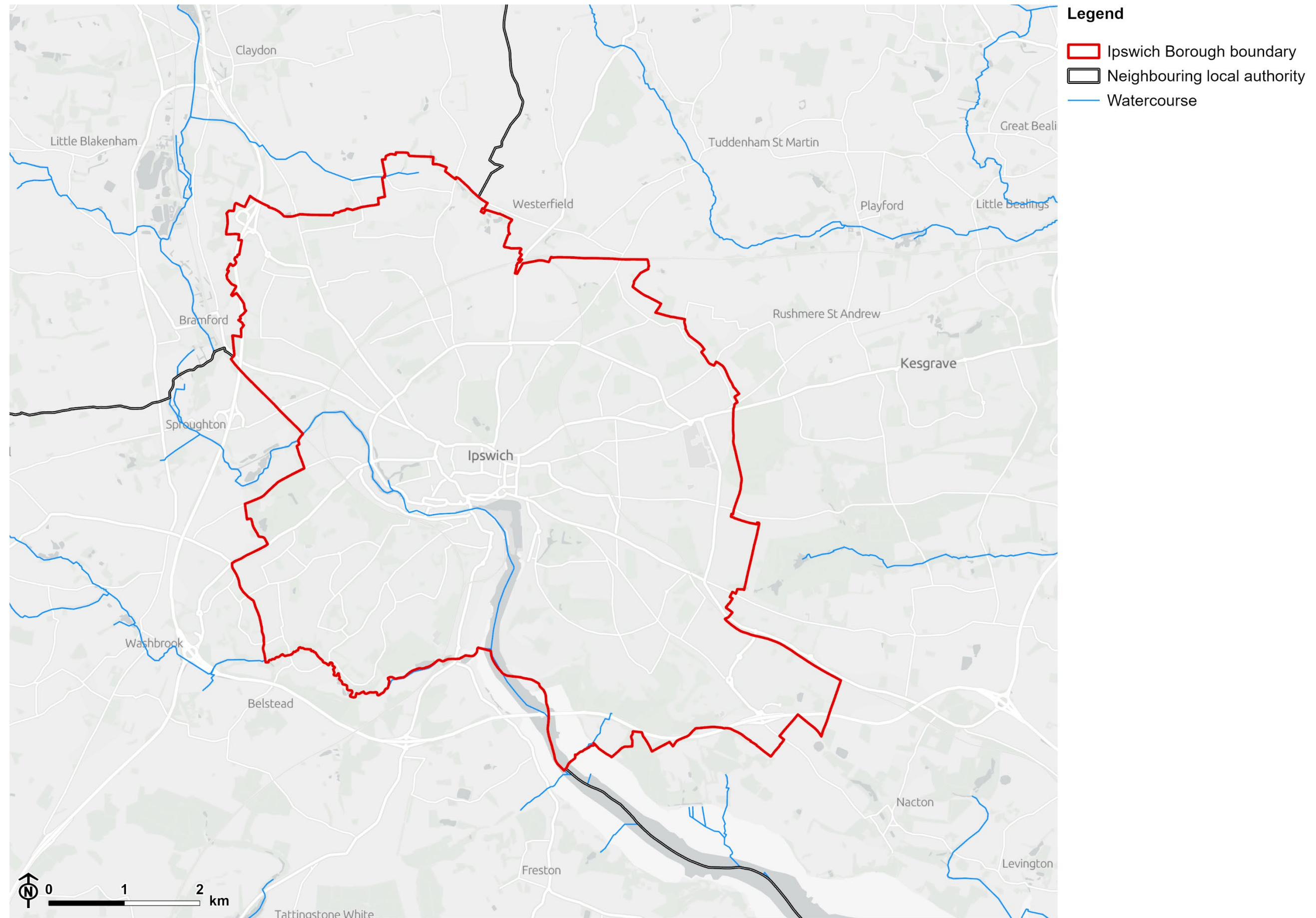
Figure 3.4: Agricultural Land Classification



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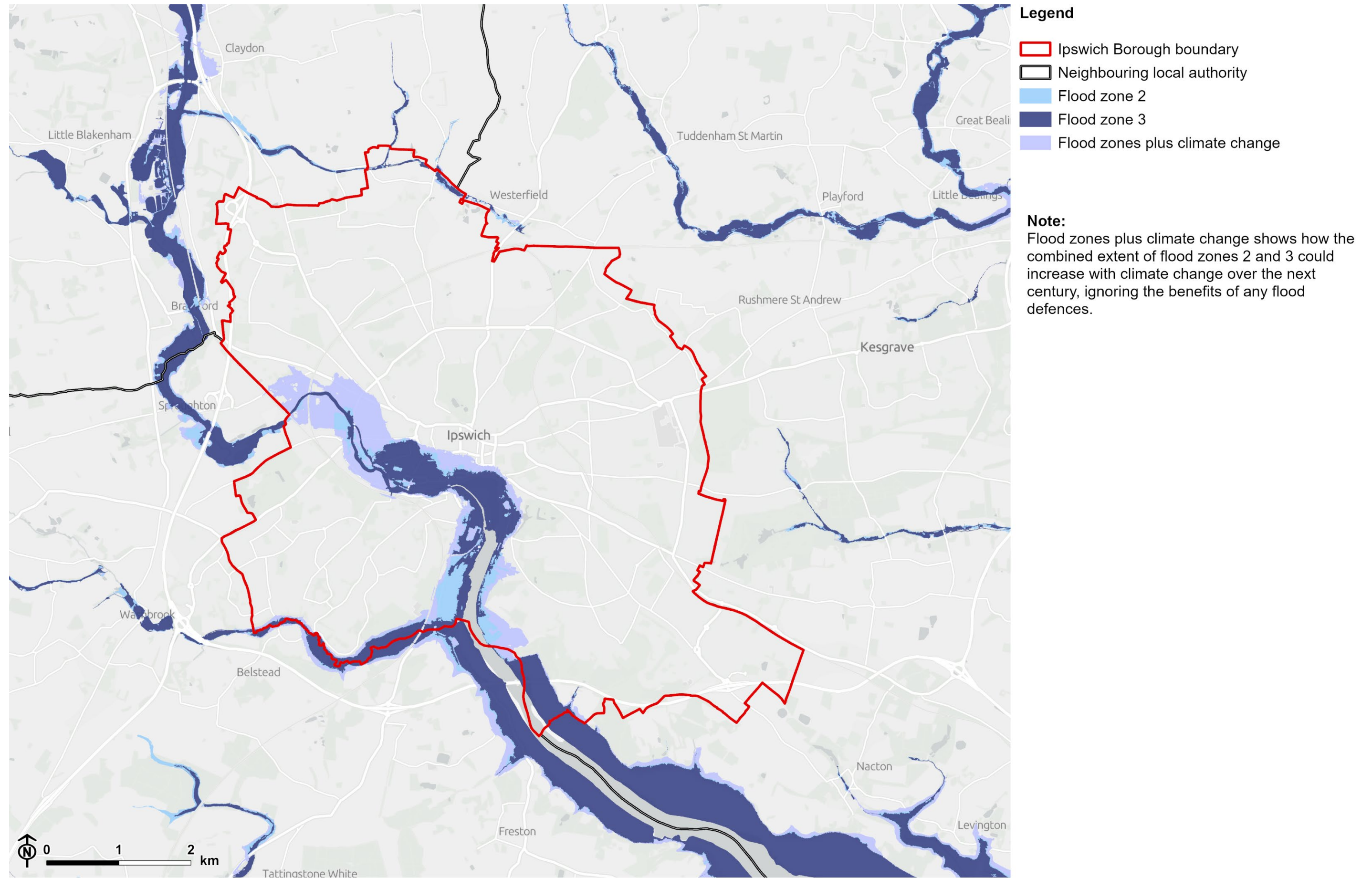
Figure 3.5: Watercourses



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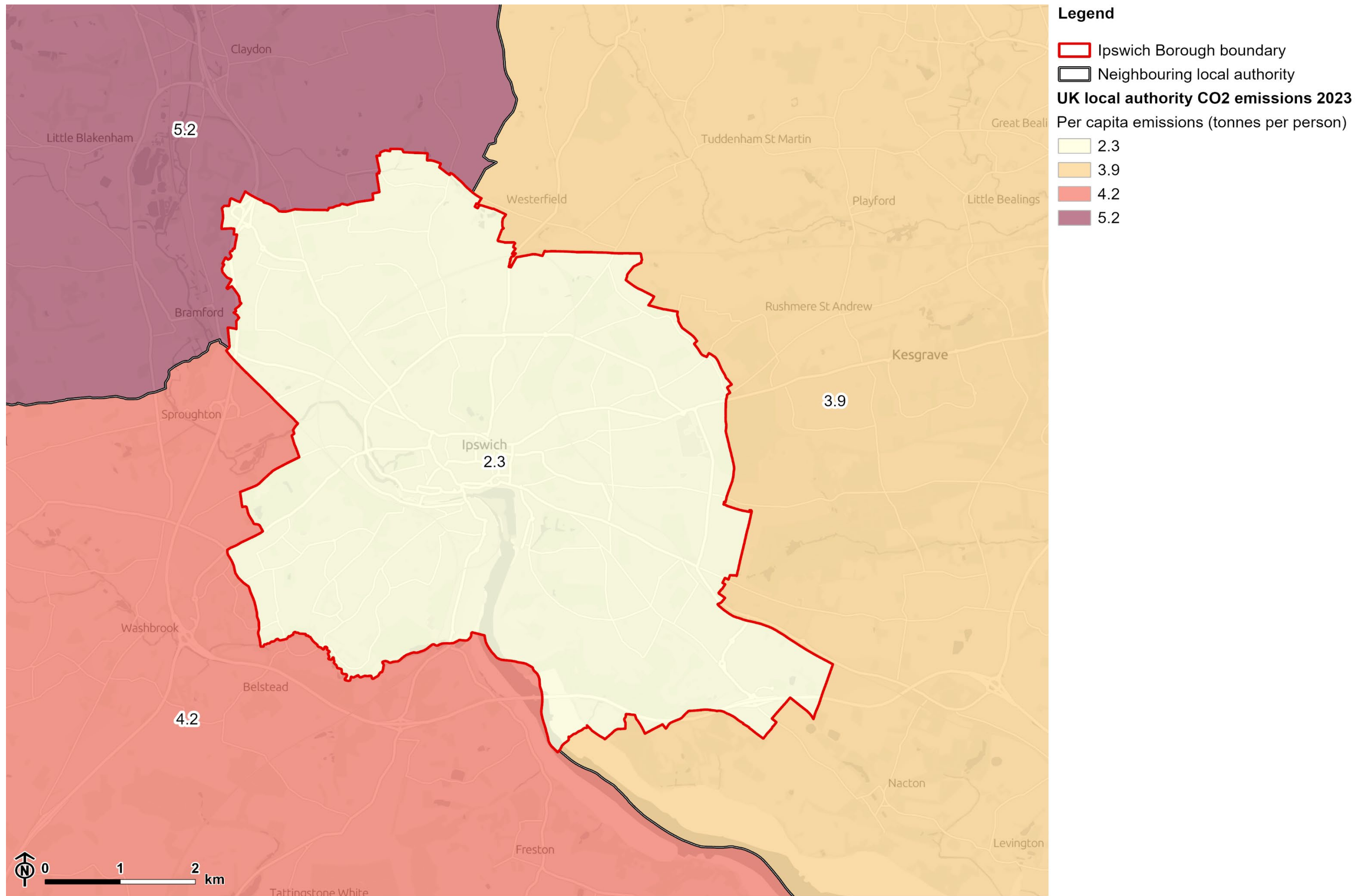
Figure 3.6: Flood risk



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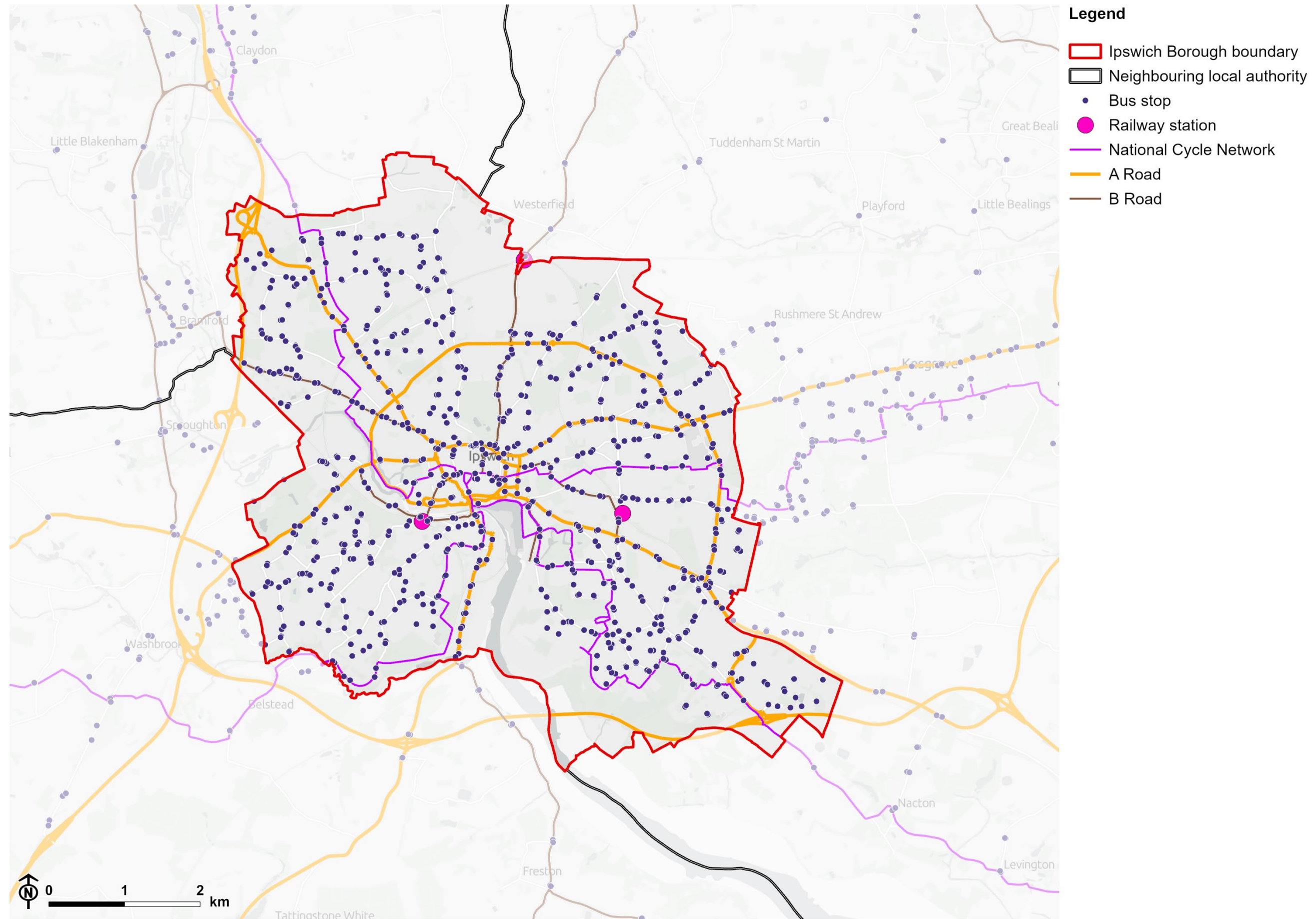
Figure 3.7: Per capita CO<sub>2</sub> emissions compared to neighbouring authorities



Created by LUC - Per capita CO<sub>2</sub> emissions 04/06/2026

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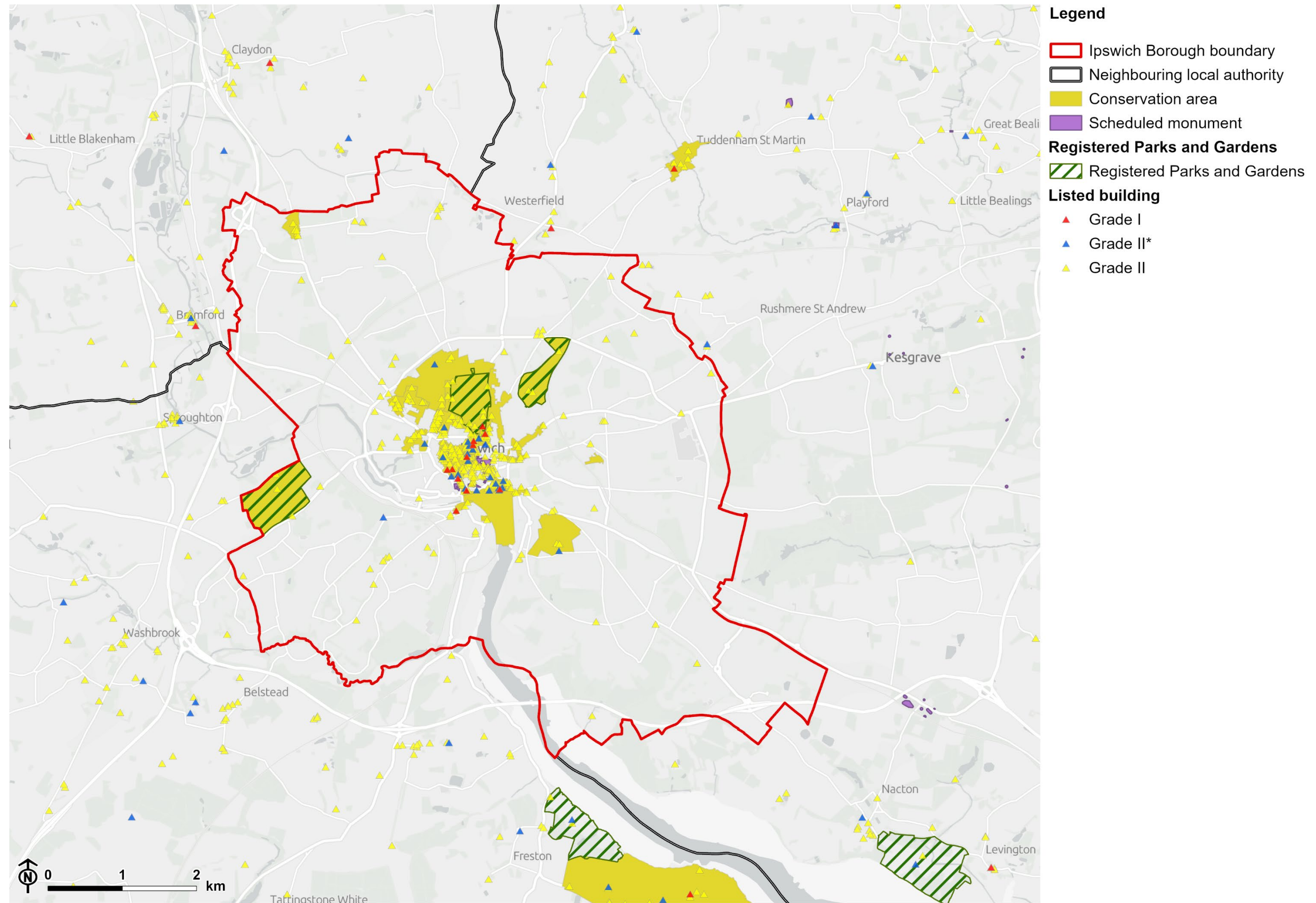
Figure 3.8: Transport network



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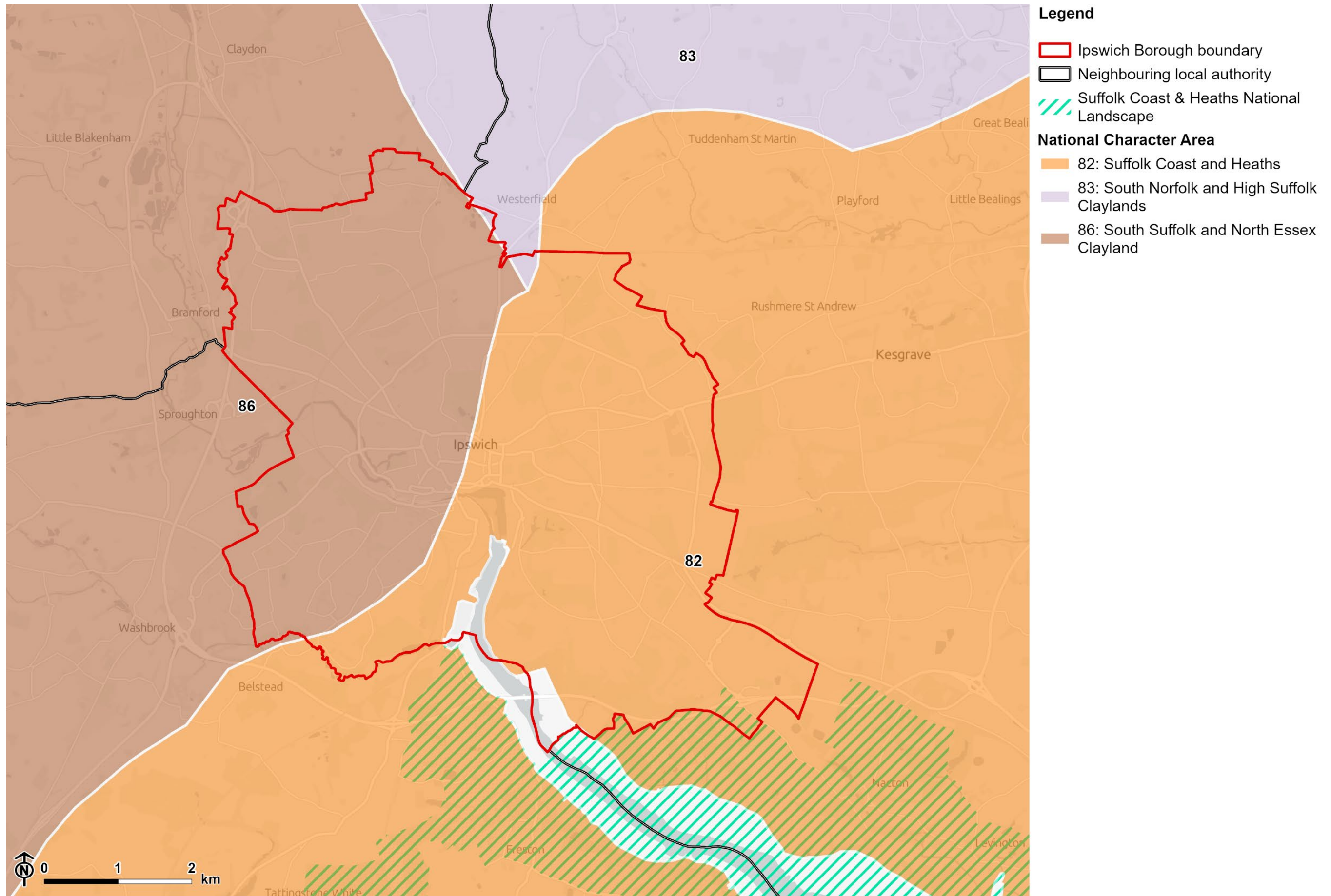
Figure 3.9: Heritage assets



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Figure 3.10: Landscape Character Areas



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## Difficulties and data limitations

**3.101** The SEA Regulations, Schedule 2(8) require the Environmental Report to include:

A description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information.

**3.102** At this stage, given the content and purpose of the SEA Scoping Report, it is considered appropriate to note the following data limitations which were identified as the report was prepared:

- Data was not available on existing services and facilities outside of/close to Ipswich Borough.
- Data in relation to some topic areas is relatively dated, as the most recent evidence studies were prepared to support the adopted Local Plan (2022). A range of updated evidence studies will be prepared to support the new Local Plan and will be taken into account in the SEA as they become available.

**3.103** Where data limitations have been identified, if relevant updates sources become available at a later stage of the SEA process, they will be used to update the baseline information informing the appraisal work.

## Chapter 4

# Key sustainability issues and likely evolution without the Plan

**4.1** Analysis of the baseline information has enabled a number of key sustainability issues facing Ipswich Borough to be identified. Identification of the key sustainability issues (and consideration of how these issues might develop over time if the new Local Plan is not implemented) helps to meet the requirements of Annex 1 of the SEA Directive, which is to provide information on “the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan; and any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan”.

**4.2** Key sustainability issues for Ipswich were previously identified through the SA/SEA Scoping process in 2017 for the adopted Local Plan. These issues have been considered as a starting point but have been fully reviewed during the preparation of this SEA Scoping Report for the new Local Plan, in light of the updated policy review and latest baseline information. The current set of key sustainability issues for Ipswich is presented overleaf.

**4.3** It is also a requirement of the SEA Regulations that consideration be given to the likely evolution of the environment in the plan area (in this case Ipswich Borough) if the new Local Plan was not to be implemented. This analysis is also presented overleaf in relation to each of the key sustainability issues.

**4.4** The information collated shows that, in general, the current trends in relation to the various social, economic and environmental issues affecting Ipswich would be more likely to continue without the implementation of the new Local Plan, although the policies in the adopted Local Plan would still go some way towards addressing many of the issues. In most cases, the new Local Plan offers opportunities to affect existing trends directly and strongly in a positive way, through an up-to-date plan which reflects the requirements of the NPPF.

**4.5** Key sustainability issues in Ipswich (including environmental problems as required by the SEA Regulations) are set out below:

- **Ipswich Borough contains areas of high biodiversity value including the internationally important sites of the Stour and Orwell Estuaries.** The new Local Plan provides an opportunity to support the protection and enhancement of these biodiversity assets. Without the new Local Plan, there is a risk that development could come forward in a fragmented way,

resulting in less coordinated protection, mitigation, and enhancement of biodiversity assets across the Borough.

- **Housing completions in recent years have been below the stepped housing requirement of the adopted Local Plan Review.** To meet the needs of a growing population, an adequate supply of housing, including affordable homes is required. The new Local Plan provides an opportunity to facilitate and expedite the delivery of homes in the Borough, including affordable housing. Without the new Local Plan, house prices may be more likely to become increasingly unaffordable and there is greater potential for the housing stock to become mismatched to local needs.
- **Ipswich Borough has a higher proportion of younger people (under 15) and a lower proportion of older people (65+) than the national average,** which can result in increased pressures on certain services and facilities such as nurseries and schools – some of which are already over capacity. The new Local Plan offers an opportunity to improve access to and increase availability of such services and facilities. Without the new Local Plan, there is more likely to be an increasing strain on services and facilities which do not meet local demand.
- **Ipswich Borough has a number of health and well-being issues including low life expectancy, high childhood obesity rates, low physical activity levels and high inactive physical activity levels.** The new Local Plan could contribute to tackling issues of health and wellbeing and general health disparities through policies that strongly support uptake of active modes of transport, access to green space, community facilities, improved public realm and other recreation opportunities, in particular in more deprived areas. Without the new Local Plan, there is more likely to be an ongoing decline in the population's health and well-being.
- **There are relatively high levels of deprivation within the Borough which is the most relatively deprived area within the county, although levels of deprivation vary significantly, highlighting inequalities.** The new Local Plan offers an opportunity to reduce the level of deprivation in areas through appropriately planned growth and regeneration. Therefore, without the new Local Plan, deprivation is less likely to be effectively tackled, and inequalities are more likely to remain.
- **There are areas of high quality agricultural land surrounding the built-up area of Ipswich which requires protection from development.** The new Local Plan provides an opportunity to ensure that this resource is not lost or compromised by future growth by prioritising the development of brownfield land and poorer agricultural land over the best and most

versatile grades. Therefore, without the new Local Plan, agricultural land is less likely to be protected.

- **Ipswich Borough has low levels of recycling for both household and non-household waste.** The new Local Plan provides an opportunity to adopt up-to-date policies seeking to minimise waste, increase re-use and recycling. It will also provide an opportunity to deliver adequate space in new developments for waste facilities capable of accommodating recyclable waste. Therefore, without the new Local Plan, low levels of recycling within the Borough may continue.
- **Ipswich Borough is located within the Anglian River Basin, which is prone to drought and within a water stressed area.** The new Local Plan provides an opportunity to support measures to protect and improve water stress in the area. Without the new Local Plan, it is possible that development could be located in areas that will exacerbate water stress issues.
- **Large parts of the Borough along the River Orwell and River Gipping fall into Flood Zone 2 and 3, placing them at risk of flooding from tidal and surface water sources.** The new Local Plan offers an opportunity to plan strategically to locate new development in areas at lower risk from flooding, therefore reducing the number of properties and economic assets at risk from flooding. Without the new Local Plan, flood risk will continue to affect the Borough through increased and higher intensity flooding.
- **There are three AQMAs in the Borough.** The new Local Plan offers the opportunity to address this issue by promoting sustainable travel and ensuring that the potential air quality impacts of new development are assessed and managed accordingly. Without the new Local Plan, poor air quality in those areas is more likely to remain, although the shift to EVs will help support improvements in air quality.
- **While emissions from all sectors have fallen in Ipswich Borough since 2005, carbon dioxide emissions from transport and domestic sources contribute greatly to overall emissions.** The new Local Plan provides an opportunity to incorporate uses and development layout and design that will help to limit carbon emissions associated with transport and energy use. It may also support the incorporation of infrastructure for energy generation from renewable sources. Without the new Local Plan, these issues are less likely to be well addressed.

- **Hotter, drier summers are expected as a result of ongoing and accelerating climate change, which have the potential for adverse effects on human health and the natural environment.** The new Local Plan offers another opportunity to update the Borough's approach to managing the effects of the changing climate and associated weather events, particularly in the design of new buildings, whole developments and green infrastructure. Therefore, without the new Local Plan, this issue is likely to be less well addressed.
- **Ipswich Borough's economic performance has been weaker than the national average in recent years** and the employment rate is low, with higher numbers of people claiming unemployment related benefits, lower gross weekly pay, higher rates of unemployment, lower levels of qualifications and a decrease in the number of businesses across the Borough in the year leading up to 2025. The new Local Plan offers the opportunity to plan a co-ordinated approach to employment which will lead to increased employment opportunities across the Borough. Without the new Local Plan trends of poor economic performance are likely to continue.
- **Ipswich Borough has extensive heritage interest including one asset on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register, and four others on the Ipswich Buildings at Risk Register.** The new Local Plan provides an opportunity to draw on the most up to date evidence to ensure that new development is sited and designed so as to conserve, enhance and encourage enjoyment of the historic environment as well as improve accessibility and interpretation of it. Therefore, without the new Local Plan, the historic environment is less likely to be protected and enhanced and the condition of assets may worsen.
- **There are areas of landscape sensitivity around Ipswich Borough, including the Suffolk Coast & Heaths National Landscape which falls partly within the Borough.** The new Local Plan offers an opportunity to take into account the most recent landscape-related evidence and to ensure that sensitive landscapes and townscapes are protected and enhanced, with development being located and designed to take account of the variation in character and sensitivity across Ipswich Borough. The new Local Plan also offers the opportunity to take into account the new requirement for local planning authorities to seek to further the purposes of National Landscapes. Without the new Local Plan, this issue is less likely to be addressed as it is more likely that piecemeal and ad-hoc developments would come forward.

## Chapter 5

### SEA framework

**5.1** The development of a set of SEA objectives (known as the SEA framework) is a recognised way in which the likely environmental effects of a plan can be described, analysed and compared.

**5.2** The SEA framework comprises a set of SEA objectives against which the Local Plan will be assessed. The assessment of the Local Plan options, policies and site allocations against these SEA objectives will be guided in part by the assessment questions accompanying each objective. These questions are not exhaustive, and some may be more relevant to certain elements of the Local Plan than others.

**5.3** The proposed SEA framework for the Ipswich Local Plan is presented below. The previous SA/SEA framework for the adopted Ipswich Local Plan Review was considered as a starting point to inform the preparation of this SEA framework, although it has been amended to take into account the analysis of international, national and local policy objectives, the baseline information, and the key sustainability issues currently facing Ipswich. Only SEA is now required (as opposed to an integrated SA/SEA under the previous plan-making system) and so the objectives have been structured by SEA topic with a particular focus on environmental effects, although it still extends to some social and economic issues.

**5.4** All of the topics specifically required by the SEA Regulations (set out in Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations) are clearly addressed by the headline SEA objectives. Separately, the Suffolk authorities have worked collaboratively to develop a shared, county-wide set of objectives. These are listed under each of the SEA objectives below, where relevant.

### SEA objective 1: To conserve and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity

#### Assessment questions

- Will the option or policy conserve and enhance both designated and undesignated ecological assets, including the Stour and Orwell Estuaries?

- Will the option or policy protect sites, features and areas of geological value?
- Will the option or policy maintain and enhance woodland/hedgerow cover and management?
- Will the option or policy encourage the development of new biodiversity assets and linkages to existing habitats within and alongside development?
- Will the option or policy support delivery of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy?
- Will the option or policy provide and manage opportunities for people to come into contact with nature while encouraging respect for and raising awareness of the sensitivity of the natural environment?
- Will the option or policy support the protection, enhancement and provision of green and blue infrastructure?

### **Relevant SEA topic**

- Biodiversity

### **Relevant Suffolk objective(s)**

- Biodiversity

## **SEA objective 2: To meet the housing requirements of the whole community**

### **Assessment questions**

- Will the option or policy meet local housing need, including specialist housing needs?
- Will the option or policy improve access to affordable housing?
- Will the option or policy improve the quality of housing stock?
- Will the option or policy provide a mix of housing types and tenures?

## **SEA topic**

- Population

## **Relevant Suffolk objective(s)**

- Housing

## **SEA objective 3: To improve the health of the population overall and reduce health inequalities**

### **Assessment questions**

- Will the option or policy improve people's physical health and mental well-being?
- Will the option or policy help address the main causes of ill health (obesity and low physical activity levels) by encouraging healthier lifestyles?
- Will the option or policy enhance existing open spaces and provide new ones?
- Will the option or policy support access to primary healthcare facilities?
- Will the option or policy protect residential amenity?
- Will the option or policy provide good access to services and facilities?

## **SEA topic**

- Human health

## **Relevant Suffolk objective(s)**

- Community, health and wellbeing
- Accessibility

## **SEA objective 4: To conserve and enhance soil and mineral resources**

### Assessment questions

- Will the option or policy promote the re-use of previously developed land?
- Will the option or policy avoid development of best and most versatile agricultural land?
- Will the option or policy ensure contaminated land is remediated where appropriate?

### SEA topic

- Soils

### Relevant Suffolk objective(s)

- Natural resources

## **SEA objective 5: To conserve and enhance water quality and resources**

### Assessment questions

- Will the option or policy protect and improve the water quality?
- Will the option or policy support efficient use of water?
- Will the option or policy minimise inappropriate development in Source Protection Zones?
- Will the option or policy ensure there is sufficient wastewater treatment capacity to accommodate new development?
- Will the option or policy promote development away from waterbodies so as to minimise contaminated runoff from development?
- Will the option or policy ensure that there are sufficient water resources available to support new development?

## SEA topic

- Water

## Relevant Suffolk objective(s)

- Water

## SEA objective 6: To maintain and where possible improve air quality

### Assessment questions

- Will the option or policy minimise exposure to poor air quality?
- Will the option or policy improve air quality, particularly in the Air Quality Management Areas?
- Will the option or policy promote more sustainable transport and reduce the need to travel?
- Will the option or policy contain measures which will help to reduce congestion?
- Will the option or policy facilitate the take up of low/zero emission vehicles?
- Will the option or policy help mitigate noise and other forms of pollution?

## SEA topic

- Air

## Relevant Suffolk objective(s)

- Pollution
- Community, health and wellbeing
- Accessibility
- Transport

## **SEA objective 7: To adapt to the effects of climate change while minimising greenhouse gas emissions**

### **Assessment questions**

- Will the option or policy reduce greenhouse gas emissions from domestic, commercial and industrial sources?
- Will the option or policy plan and implement adaptation measures for the likely effects of climate change?
- Will the option or policy include energy efficiency measures?
- Will the option or policy reduce energy consumption?
- Will the option or policy encourage the development of renewable energy resources?
- Will the option or policy limit the amount of development in areas of high flood risk and areas which may increase flood risk elsewhere, taking into account the impacts of climate change?
- Will the option or policy promote the use of sustainable drainage systems and other flood resilient design?
- Will the option or policy promote the use of nature-based solutions (e.g. wetlands, ponds, rain gardens, green walls/roofs) to contribute towards climate change adaptation?
- Will the option or policy support the delivery of climate adaptation measures, including incorporation of green and blue infrastructure, and take account of those experiencing social and economic inequalities who are most affected by climate impacts?
- Will the option or policy support the delivery of development that is resilient to the changing climate and can withstand extreme weather events (e.g. heatwaves, drought, intense storms)?
- Will the option or policy reduce reliance on private vehicles and promote the use of active and sustainable modes of transport?

### **SEA topic**

- Climate change adaptation and mitigation

### **Relevant Suffolk objective(s)**

- Climate change
- Accessibility
- Transport

## **SEA objective 8: To achieve sustainable levels of prosperity and growth throughout the plan area while supporting the vitality and viability of the town**

### **Assessment questions**

- Will the option or policy support the provision of infrastructure necessary for economic growth in the plan area?
- Will the option or policy support job creation in sustainable, long term growth areas that match local skill sets?
- Will the option or policy support higher levels of educational attainment?

### **SEA topic**

- Material assets

### **Relevant Suffolk objective(s)**

- Economy and employment

## **SEA objective 9: To conserve and where appropriate enhance areas and assets of historic and archaeological importance**

### Assessment questions

- Will the option or policy conserve and enhance designated and non-designated heritage assets, including their setting and the wider historic environment?
- Will the option or policy provide opportunities for improvements to the conservation, management and enhancement of Ipswich Borough's heritage assets, particularly heritage assets at risk?
- Will the option or policy promote access to, as well as enjoyment and understanding of, the local historic environment for residents and visitors?

### SEA topic

- Cultural heritage

### Relevant Suffolk objective(s)

- Historic environment

## **SEA objective 10: To conserve and enhance the quality and local distinctiveness of landscapes and townscape**

### Assessment questions

- Will the option or policy safeguard and enhance the character of sensitive landscapes and local distinctiveness and identity?
- Will the option or policy help to safeguard the character of the National Character Areas?
- Will the option or policy protect the character and setting of the Suffolk Coast & Heaths National Landscape?

## SEA topic

- Landscape

## Relevant Suffolk objective(s)

- Landscape

## SEA objective 11: To promote efficient waste management

### Assessment questions

- Will the option or policy minimise waste generation?
- Will the option or policy increase levels of re-use and recycling?
- Will the option or policy accommodate waste management through the provision of waste facilities?

## Relevant SEA topic

- Material assets

## Relevant Suffolk objective(s)

- Natural resources

## Use of the SEA framework

**5.5** The SEA will be undertaken in close collaboration with the Ipswich Borough Council officers responsible for drafting the new Local Plan in order to fully integrate the SEA process with the production of the plan.

**5.6** Policies and site allocations, including the reasonable alternative options, will be assessed against the SEA objectives in the SEA framework, with symbols being attributed to each policy or site option to indicate their likely effects on each SEA objective. Where a potential positive or negative effect is uncertain, a question mark will be added to the relevant symbol (e.g. +? or -?) and the symbol will be colour coded in line with the potential positive, negligible or negative effect (e.g. green, blue, orange, etc.).

**5.7** The likely effects of options need to be determined and their significance assessed, which inevitably requires a series of judgments to be made. The assessment will attempt to differentiate between the most significant effects and other more minor effects through the use of the symbols. The dividing line in making a decision about the significance of an effect is often quite small. Where either (++) or (--) will be used to distinguish significant effects from more minor effects (+ or -) this will be because the effect of an option or policy on the SEA objective in question is considered to be of such magnitude that it will have a noticeable and measurable effect taking into account other factors that may influence the achievement of that objective.

**5.8** The findings of the SEA will be presented using colour coded symbols showing the likely effect of each option against each of the SEA objectives along with a concise justification for the effect identified. The key to the SEA symbols is shown in **Table 5.1** below.

**Table 5.1: SEA framework symbols and colour coding**

Symbol and colour code	Description
++	Significant positive effect likely
++/-	Mixed significant positive and minor negative effects likely
+	Minor positive effect likely
++/--	Mixed significant positive and negative effects likely
+/-	Mixed minor positive and negative effects likely
-	Minor negative effect likely
--/+	Mixed significant negative and minor positive effects likely
--	Significant negative effect likely
0	Negligible effect likely
?	Uncertain effect

**5.9** In relation to the assessment of the site options, detailed sets of site assessment criteria will be developed and applied during the next stage of the SEA. The criteria will relate specifically to each type of site option (residential, employment, mixed use etc.). The site assessment criteria will set out clear parameters within which certain SEA effects would be identified, based on factors such as the distance of site options from features such as biodiversity designations, public transport links and areas of high landscape sensitivity. The criteria, where required, may be updated at future stages of the SEA to draw on the most recent evidence sources. The site assessment criteria will be applied through the use of a Geographical Information System (GIS).

**5.10** In determining the significance of the effects of the options for potential inclusion in the new Local Plan, it will be important to bear in mind the relationship of the Local Plan with the other documents in the planning system such as the NPPF and other national policy approaches, and regulatory requirements, as these may provide additional safeguards or mitigation of potentially significant adverse effects.

## Reasonable alternatives

**5.11** The SEA must assess not only the preferred options for inclusion in the Local Plan but also ‘reasonable alternatives’ to these options. This implies that alternatives that are not reasonable do not need to be subject to assessment. Part (b) of Regulation 12(2) notes that reasonable alternatives will take into account the objectives of the plan, as well as its geographical scope. Therefore, alternatives that do not meet the objectives of national policy, local objectives or are outside the plan area are unlikely to be reasonable.

**5.12** Developing options for a plan is an iterative process, usually involving a number of consultations with the public and stakeholders. Consultation responses and the SEA can help to identify where there may be other ‘reasonable alternatives’ to the options being considered for a plan.

**5.13** The SEA findings are not the only factors taken into account when determining a preferred option to take forward in a plan. Indeed, there will often be an equal number of positive or negative effects identified by the SEA for each option, such that it is not possible to rank them based on sustainability performance in order to select a preferred option. Factors such as public opinion, deliverability and conformity with national policy will also be taken into account. Future iterations of the SEA will describe how the assessment of options has been taken into consideration when developing the Ipswich Local Plan.

# Chapter 6

## Next steps

**6.1** In order to meet the requirements of the SEA Regulations, the views of the three statutory consultees (the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England) are being sought in relation to the scope and level of detail to be included in this SEA Scoping Report.

**6.2** Consultees are in particular requested to consider the following:

- Whether the scope of the SEA is appropriate as set out considering the role of the Ipswich Local Plan to help meet and manage Ipswich's needs.
- Whether there are any additional plans, policies or programmes that are relevant to the SEA that should be included.
- Whether the baseline information provided is robust and comprehensive and provides a suitable baseline for the SEA of the new Local Plan.
- Whether there are any additional key sustainability issues relevant to the new Local Plan that should be included.
- Whether the SEA framework is appropriate and includes a suitable set of SEA objectives for assessing the effects of the options included within the new Local Plan as well as reasonable alternatives.

**6.3** Responses from consultees will be reviewed and appropriate amendments made to the information contained in the Scoping Report, including the baseline information, policy context and SEA framework where necessary.

**6.4** As the Local Plan is drafted, it will be subject to SEA using the SEA framework presented in **Chapter 5**. A full SEA Report (incorporating the next stages of the SEA process) will then be produced and made available to other stakeholders and the general public for wider consultation alongside the emerging Local Plan. This will include any amendments to the scoping work arising from the consultation with statutory bodies on this report.

LUC

June 2026

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