



Ipswich Borough Council

Baseline Data Report

October 2026



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1 Executive summary

- 1.1 This report provides a snapshot of Ipswich today and begins to identify key opportunities and challenges that will help shape the next Local Plan. It has been produced to comply with the new national plan-making system and guidance, collating evidence on the population, economy, housing, infrastructure and environment to establish a baseline
- 1.2 Ipswich plays a vital role as Suffolk's largest urban centre and county town. It is home to approximately 140,000 people and is a key centre for jobs, services, education, healthcare, culture and transport. When compared with the rest of Suffolk, Ipswich has a younger population and a larger proportion of working age residents, helping to support its role as an economic hub. However, population growth has been slower than elsewhere in Suffolk and the East of England, and similarly to the rest of the country, the population is gradually aging.
- 1.3 Ipswich performs well economically; however, significant social deprivation is also present. Levels of deprivation are higher than in many neighbouring areas, particularly in relation to education, skills, health, employment and income. Child poverty is another concern, with almost one-third of children living in relative poverty after housing costs. These issues are concentrated in some neighbourhoods, highlighting the need for targeted regeneration efforts.
- 1.4 The local economy is strong overall. Employment rates are higher than the regional and county averages, economic inactivity is relatively low and Ipswich remains Suffolk's main employment centre. Major employment sectors are health, education, public administration, retail and business services. The economy itself has remained resilient despite recent sectoral changes. However, average earnings and household incomes are lower than elsewhere in Suffolk and the East of England, suggesting that the creation of more high-value employment opportunities remains a key issue.
- 1.5 Housing is another significant challenge facing Ipswich. Housing need in the Borough exceeds identified supply, with a potential total housing shortfall of approximately 4,900 to 11,900 dwellings. Housing affordability has worsened over time, although homes in Ipswich remain less expensive than other areas in Suffolk. Homelessness pressures are higher than both the county and national averages, indicating challenges with housing access and affordability.
- 1.6 Infrastructure and connectivity within the Borough are an important strength. Ipswich benefits from good access to jobs, education, healthcare and leisure facilities, with many residents travelling relatively short distances to work. Digital connectivity is particularly strong, with excellent broadband and mobile coverage.
- 1.7 Private car travel remains the main method of transportation across the Borough, although many journeys are short enough to present opportunities for greater use of sustainable transport modes. Improving these options will be

important for future growth, to avoid congestion, improve air quality and support wider corporate climate objectives.

- 1.8 Despite being an urban authority, Ipswich hosts a rich natural environment that contributes to improving residents' quality of life. The Borough contains internationally important habitats, green spaces, parks, nature reserves and recreation areas. These assets support biodiversity, health and wellbeing, and climate resilience, but they also further constrain development. Protecting and enhancing these assets will continue to be an important consideration in any planning decisions.
- 1.9 Flood risk remains one of the most significant environmental challenges facing Ipswich. While the tidal barrier provides substantial protection and safeguards thousands of homes and businesses, large parts of the waterfront and riverside areas remain vulnerable to flooding. Climate change is expected to increase pressure on water resources and flood management, making resilience and adaptation increasingly important. Air quality also remains a concern in parts of the town, particularly along major traffic routes.
- 1.10 There are positive signs in relation to climate change, emissions have fallen substantially since 2005, reflecting both national trends and local intervention. Emissions from homes and transport remain the largest sources, meaning these sectors should receive continued attention if environmental objectives are to be achieved.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 This report sets out a baseline understanding of the issues and strategic opportunities available to Ipswich Borough Council, to better inform the preparation of the new Local Plan. It follows Guidance¹ set out by MHCLG on the topics for which baseline data should be collected. The guidance encourages local planning authorities to develop a picture of their area by investigating demographic, social, economic, housing, infrastructure, transport, connectivity, environmental evidence. It also recommends authorities use this evidence to identify strategic issues that the plan should seek to address.
- 2.2 Gathering baseline information is an important step in the plan-making process. It allows for the establishment of current conditions, identifies how the Borough has changed over time and highlights opportunities and challenges that the emerging Local Plan should seek to address. The evidence in this report will inform the future stages of plan preparation, this includes the development of; a vision, spatial strategy, evidence studies and stakeholder engagement.
- 2.3 The report draws together the latest available evidence across a range of topics to provide an overview of Ipswich and establish an informed starting point for the new Local Plan. Each section summarises the key characteristics and identifies issues that may influence plan-making.
- 2.4 There is an intentional degree of overlap between this baseline report and the baseline information prepared for the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), which forms part of the wider Sustainability Appraisal process. Both draw on evidence about the Borough's social, economic and environmental conditions; however, they serve distinct purposes. This report establishes a broad evidence base to inform the Local Plan, while the SEA uses relevant baseline information to identify sustainability issues, develop an assessment framework and consider the likely significant effects of reasonable plan alternatives.
- 2.5 The wider corporate priorities of the Council also provide strategic context for the preparation of the new Local Plan. The Corporate Strategy establishes aspirations related to economic growth, town centre regeneration, environmental improvement, community wellbeing and reducing inequalities. This is supported by the following further strategies; Biodiversity Strategy, Cornhill Strategy, Digital Strategy, Communications Strategy, Community Engagement Strategy, Digital Strategy, Sport and Physical Activity Strategy and Sports Facility Strategy, which identify place-based objectives for the Borough, including supporting the Council's ambition for Ipswich as a 'Home of Opportunity. As a collective, these documents support a new Local Plan that would seek to promote sustainable growth, town centre revitalisation, biodiversity improvements, digital connectivity, healthy communities and accessible infrastructure, ensuring planning policies contribute towards the achievement of broader corporate objectives.

¹ [Gathering baselining information to inform a local plan - GOV.UK](#)

- 2.6 Further information on the Council's monitoring framework, including published Authority Monitoring Reports, is available through the Ipswich Borough Council Monitoring webpage.
- 2.7 In addition to the baseline data provided in this report, the Council has begun mapping a range of information to build upon the spatial understanding of the Borough and inform the preparation of the new Local Plan. A geospatial portal is available to the public with a scaled back level of constraints mapped.

3 Demographic profile

- 3.1 The demographic data available to us confirms Ipswich as Suffolk's principle urban centre, with an estimated population of 140,274 in 2024, and median age of 38. This is seven years below the Suffolk median and three years below the East of England median.

Table 1: 2024 Population Data - Ipswich, Suffolk and East of England²

Area	Population	5-year change	Density / km ²	Median age
Ipswich	140,274	-0.4%	3,551	38
Suffolk	786,231	3.8%	207	45
East of England	6,576,306	4.8%	344	41

- 3.2 Ipswich also has a higher proportion of children and working-age residents and a lower proportion aged 65 and over, compared to Suffolk and the East of England as a whole.

Table 2: Population age split and dependency ratio - Ipswich, Suffolk and East of England

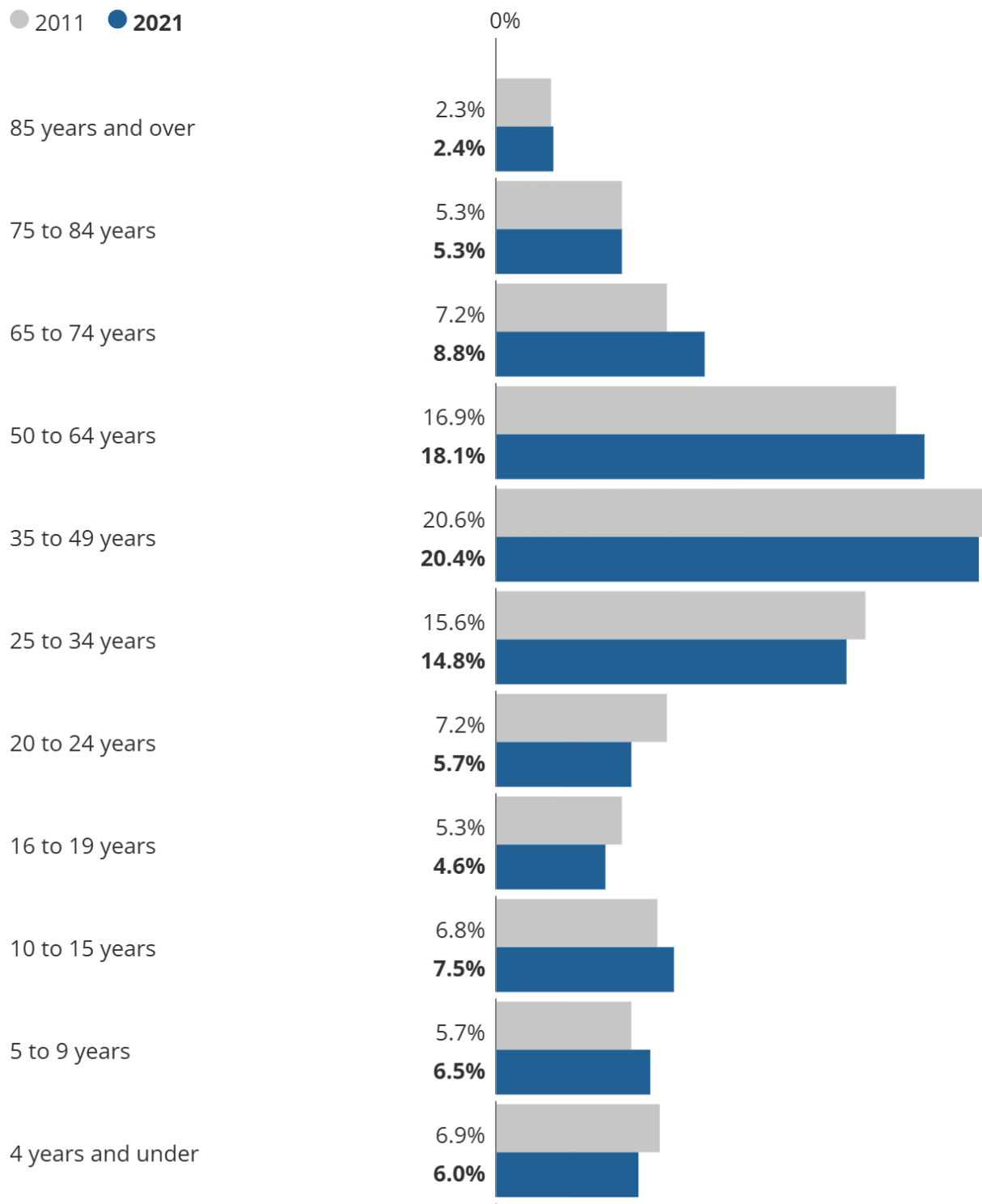
Area	Age 0–15	Age 16–64	Age 65+	Dependency ratio
Ipswich	20.3%	62.6%	17.1%	59.7%
Suffolk	17.1%	58.7%	24.2%	70.4%
East of England	18.8%	61.3%	20.0%	63.2%

- 3.3 Over the five-year period to 2024, Ipswich recorded a slight population decline of 0.38%, compared with growth of 3.82% across Suffolk and 4.82% across the East of England. However, the most recent annual figures show an increase in Ipswich's population, rising from 139,497 in 2023 to 140,274 in 2024.

² **Source:** Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Figure 1: Age profile of Ipswich residents, 2011 and 2021 Censuses

Percentage of usual residents by age group, Ipswich



Source: Office for National Statistics – 2011 Census and Census 2021

3.4 The age profile changed little between 2011 and 2021, there was evidence of a gradually aging population, with increases in older age groups and reduction in those 20-24.

Figure 2: Population pyramid for Ipswich, Suffolk and East of England, 2024

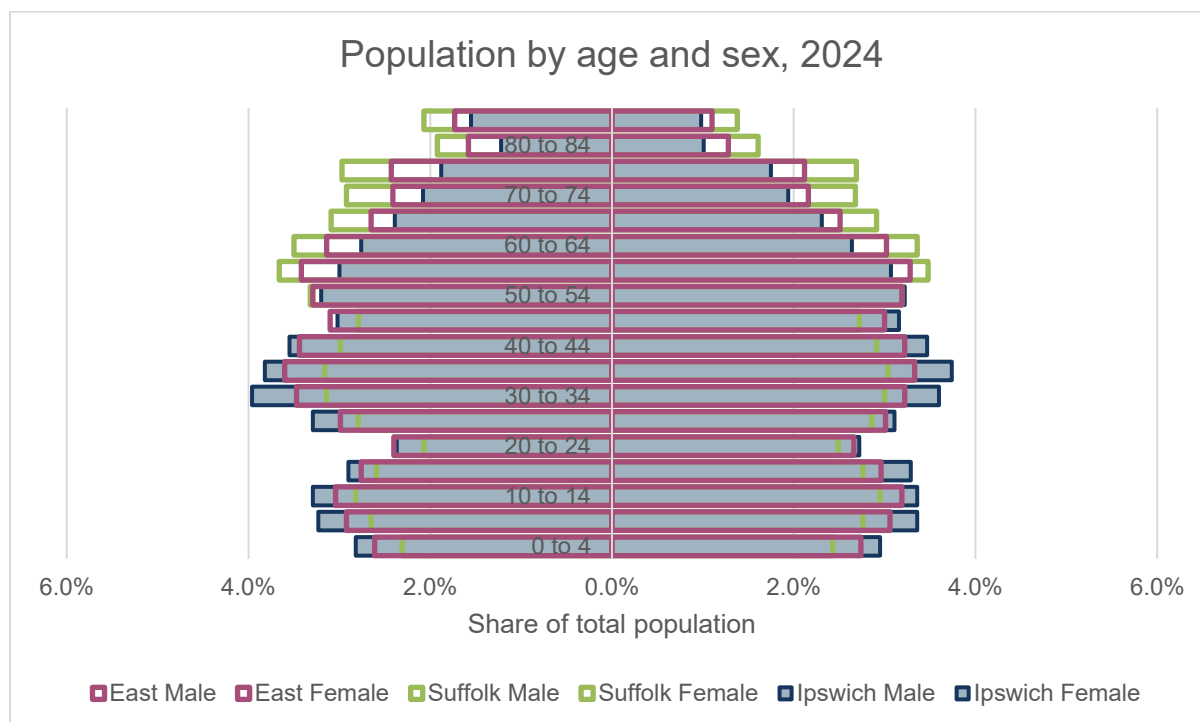


Figure 3: Proportion of the population aged 0–15 in Ipswich, Suffolk and the East of England, 1991–2024

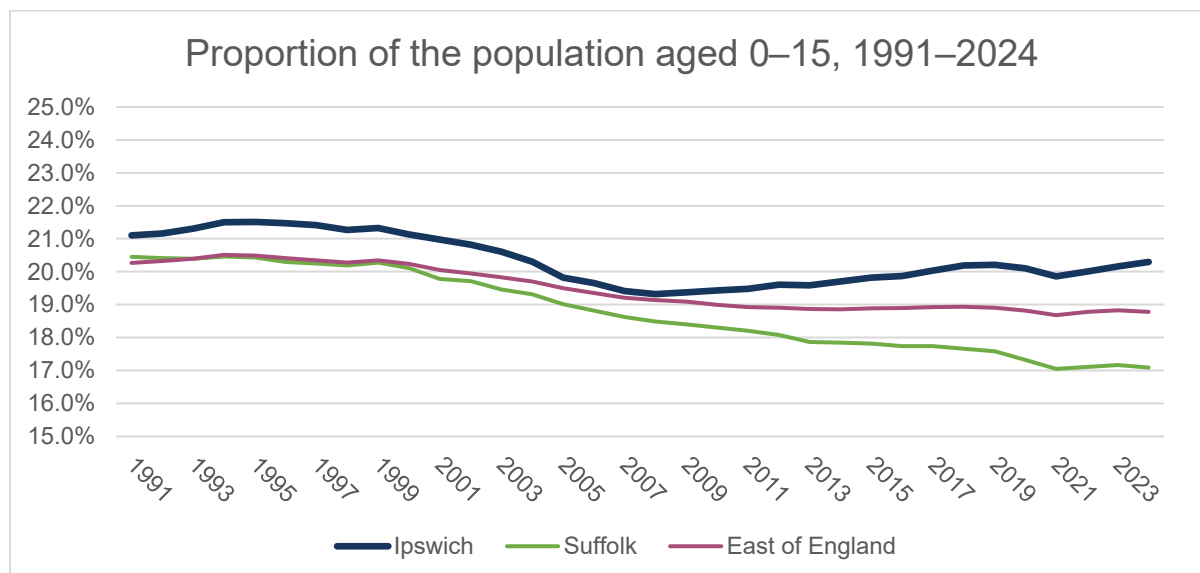


Figure 4: Proportion of the total population aged 16–64 in Ipswich, Suffolk and the East of England, 1991–2024

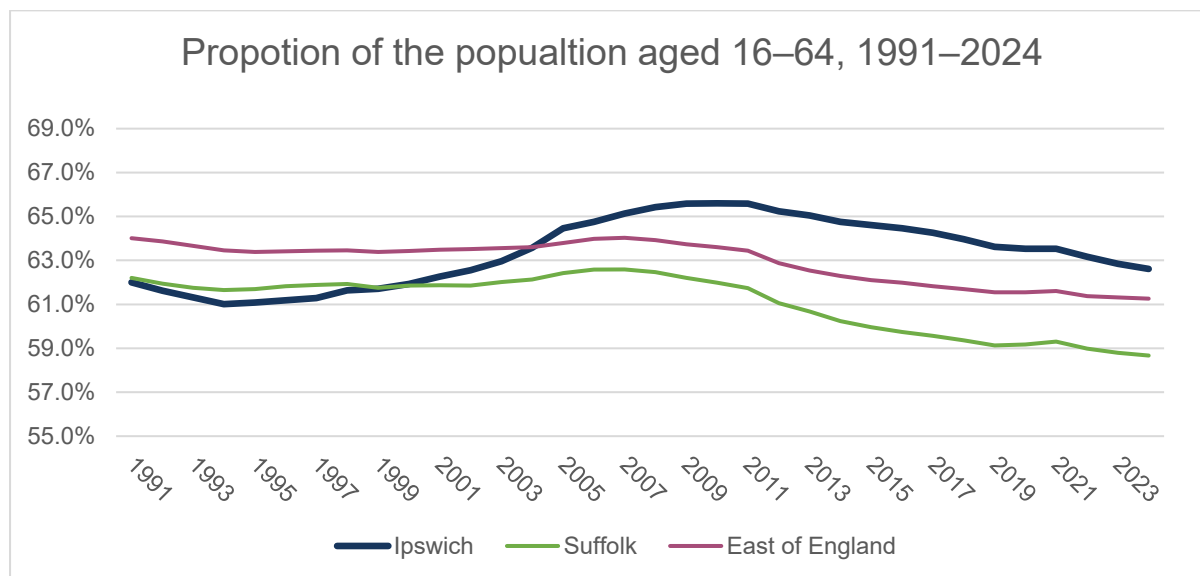


Figure 5: Proportion of the total population aged 65 and over in Ipswich, Suffolk and the East of England, 1991–2024

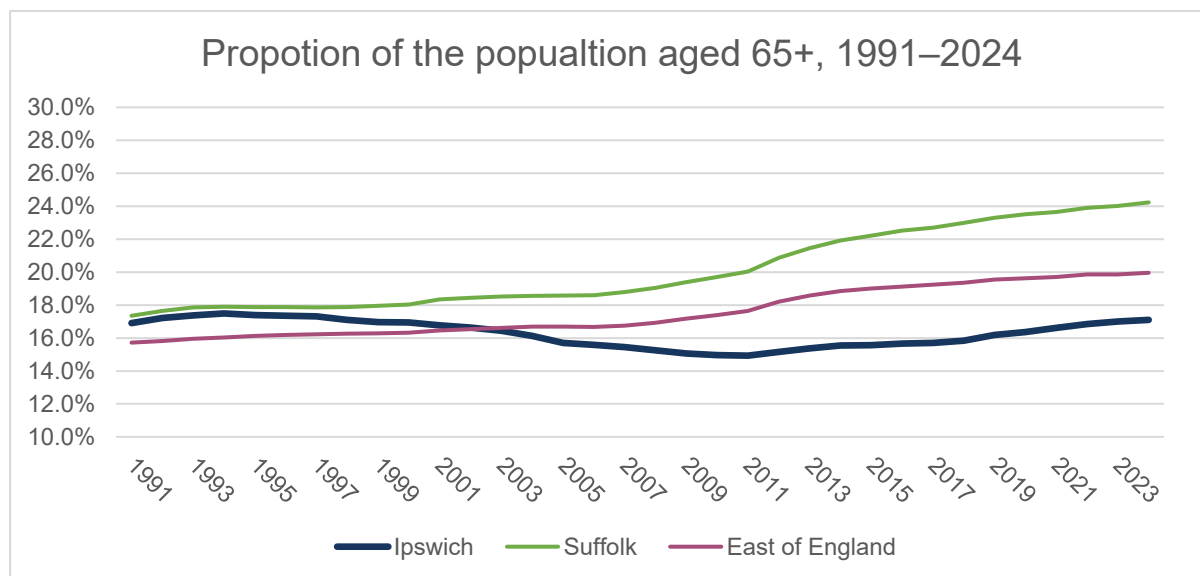
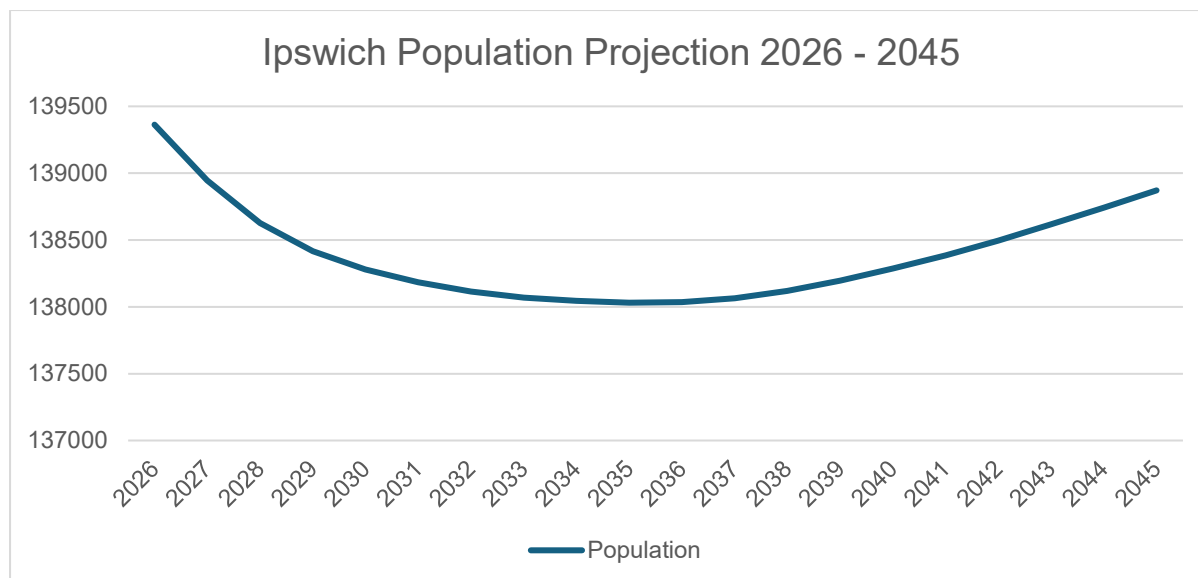


Figure 6: Ipswich Population Projection 2026-2045³

3.5 Ipswich's population is projected to slightly decline over the next plan period, from an expected 139,363 in 2026, reaching 138,871 in 2045. A decline of 0.4% below the 2026 level.

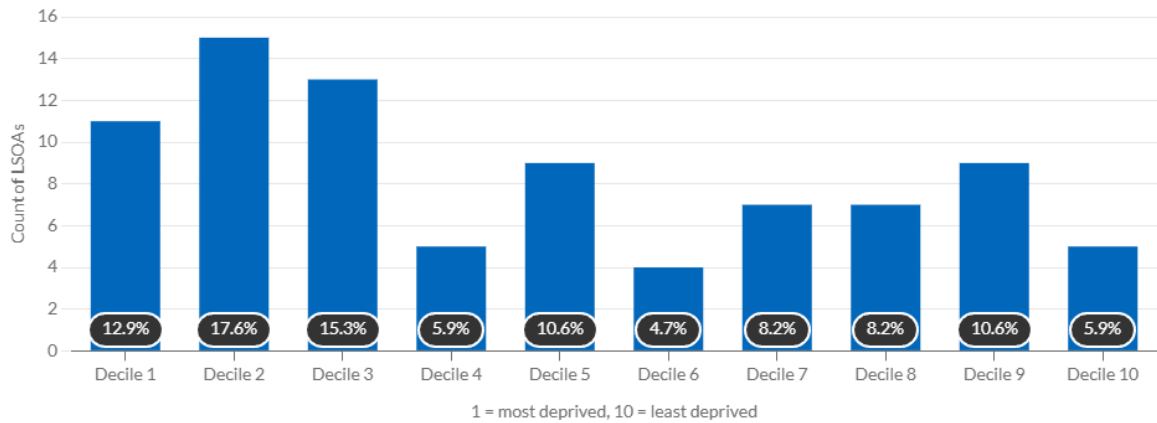
Demographics – key findings

- Population growth in Ipswich has been slower than across Suffolk and the East of England in recent years.
- Ipswich has a younger age profile and a higher proportion of working-age residents than Suffolk and the East of England.
- Ipswich's population is expected to see a minor decline across the coming plan period.
- The proportion of Ipswich's population aged 65 and over has increased since around 2010, although it remains substantially lower than in Suffolk and the East of England.

³ **Source:** Office for National Statistics (ONS), *Subnational population projections for England, 2022-based*

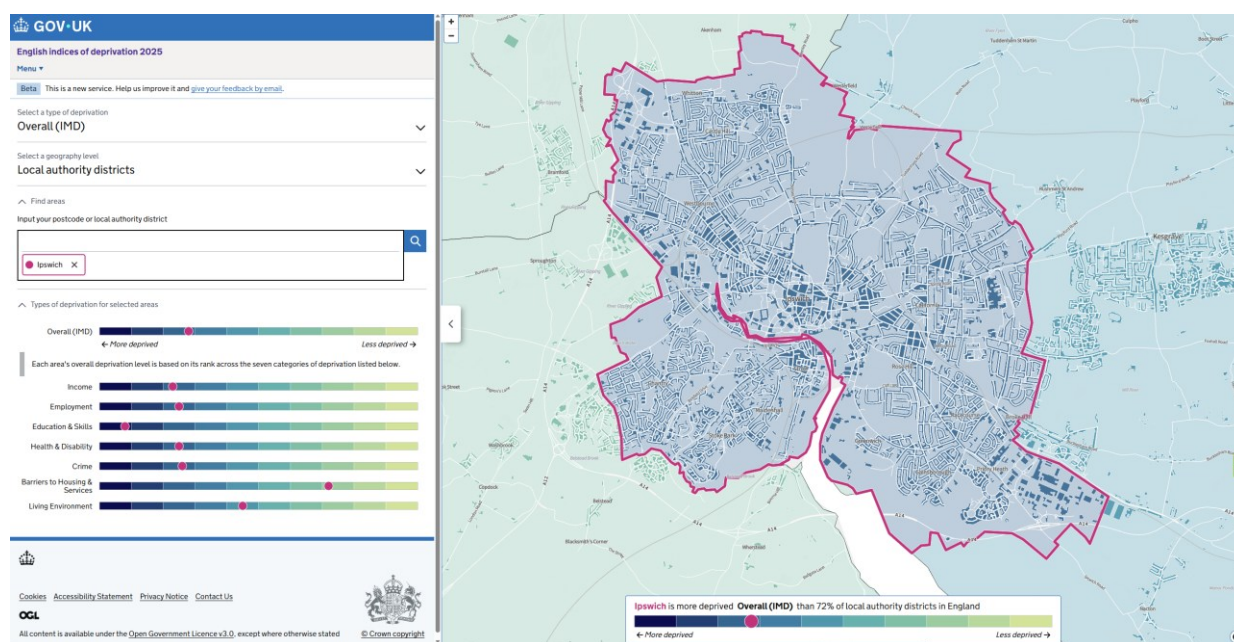
4 Deprivation

Figure 6: Lower-layer Super Output Area's in Ipswich by decile (2025)⁴



- 4.1 The 2025 IMD data indicates that Ipswich has a high concentration of neighbourhoods within the more deprived deciles. Of the 85 Lower-layer Super Output Areas (LSOA) within Ipswich, 45.9% fall within the most deprived 30% nationally, with 30.6% within the most deprived 20% and 12.9% within the most deprived 10%.
- 4.2 This represents a higher concentration of neighbourhoods within the more deprived deciles than is observed across Suffolk and the East of England. To compare, 20.3% of Suffolk LSOAs and 18.6% of East of England LSOAs are within the most deprived 30% nationally.
- 4.3 The Ipswich profile also demonstrates considerable variation between neighbourhoods. LSOAs are represented across all ten national deprivation deciles, including 5.9% within the least deprived 10% nationally. Overall, the distribution is nevertheless weighted towards the lower deprivation deciles.
- 4.4 Deprivation is unevenly distributed across Ipswich but is generally more concentrated than in Suffolk and the East of England.
- 4.5 The IMD highlights the socio-economic challenges within the Borough, Ipswich has particularly high levels of deprivation in relation to education, skills and training, where it is more deprived than 92% of other local authority districts in England. The borough also performs poorly across income, employment, health and disability and crime indicators.
- 4.6 However, Ipswich performs relatively well in the Barriers to Housing and Services area, indicating that residents generally have good physical access to services.

⁴ **Source:** Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), *Local Deprivation Explorer 2025*

Figure 7: Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) across Ipswich, 2025⁵

4.7 Ipswich's ranking across the seven deprivation indicators and two supplementary indices are as follows:

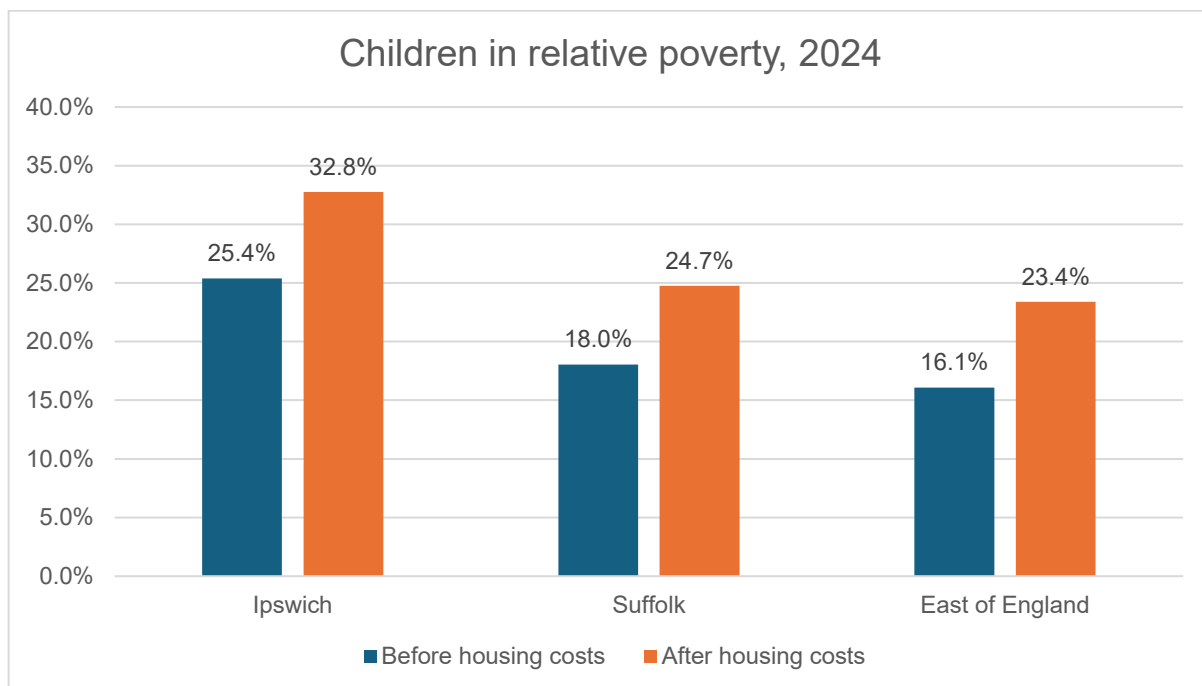
- Income Deprivation: Ipswich is more deprived than 77% of local authority districts in England.
- Employment Deprivation: Ipswich is more deprived than 75% of local authority districts in England.
- Education, Skills and Training Deprivation: Ipswich is more deprived than 92% of local authority districts in England.
- Health and Disability Deprivation: Ipswich is more deprived than 75% of local authority districts in England.
- Crime Deprivation: Ipswich is more deprived than 74% of local authority districts in England.
- Barriers to Housing and Services Deprivation: Ipswich is less deprived than 72% of local authority districts in England.
- Living Environment Deprivation: Ipswich is more deprived than 55% of local authority districts in England.
- Income deprivation affecting children: Ipswich is more deprived than 76% of local authority districts in England.
- Income deprivation affecting old people: Ipswich is more deprived than 66% of local authority districts in England.

4.8 Figure 9 below illustrates that in 2024, Ipswich experienced substantially higher levels of child poverty than both Suffolk and the East of England. Before housing costs, 25.4% of children in Ipswich were living in relative poverty, compared with 18.0% in Suffolk and 16.1% across the East of England. Once housing costs are considered, poverty rates increase across all areas, rising to 32.8% in Ipswich, 24.7% in Suffolk and 23.4% in the East of England. Almost

⁵ **Source:** Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), *Local Deprivation Explorer 2025 – Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)*

one in three children in Ipswich are living in relative poverty after housing costs. While housing costs increase child poverty rates by between 6.7 and 7.4 percentage points across all geographies, Ipswich consistently records the highest levels of deprivation.

Figure 8: Children in relative poverty 2024 – Ipswich, Suffolk and East of England



Deprivation – key findings

- There are significant levels of deprivation in parts of the Borough, with considerable variation across Ipswich.
- Education, skills and training deprivation is a particular area of concern, with relatively high levels of deprivation evident across parts of the Borough
- Child poverty remains considerably higher than County and regional averages.

5 Economy and employment

- 5.1 Employment and economic data indicates that Ipswich is performing well relative to both Suffolk and the East of England, with higher levels of employment and substantially lower economic inactivity. This suggests that Ipswich continues to fulfil its role as an economic hub within Suffolk.

Table 3: Local Economy Indicators for Ipswich, Suffolk and East of England⁶

Indicator	Ipswich	Suffolk	East of England
Economic inactivity, 2023	12.00%	19.80%	19.40%
Employment rate, 2023	85.90%	77.20%	77.50%
Modelled unemployment, 2023	3.70%	—	3.60%
Claimant Count, 2025	4.30%	2.80%	3.20%
Job density, 2024	0.89	0.87	0.83
GDHI per head, 2024	£21,816	£24,802	£26,795
Gross median weekly pay, 2025	£581.50	£609.90	£670.80
GVA per hour, 2023	£42.52	—	£39.69
GVA per job, 2023	£64,605	—	£62,724
Active businesses, 2024	5,250	31,125	285,540

- 5.2 Ipswich recorded an employment rate of 85.9% in 2023, significantly above Suffolk, the East of England and England averages. Employment rates have increased substantially since 2011.
- 5.3 Economic activity was 12.0% in 2023, well below county, regional and national averages. However, inactivity did increase following the pandemic, levels are still below historic trends.
- 5.4 However, income levels within Ipswich are lower than neighbouring areas, with gross disposable income per head at £21,816 in 2024, below Suffolk and East of England at £24,802 and £26,795 respectively.

⁶ **Source:** Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Table 4: Change in job count per industry in Ipswich⁷

Industry	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	100	35	75	35	40
Mining, quarrying & utilities	1,500	1,000	1,500	1,500	1,750
Manufacturing	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,250	2,000
Construction	3,000	3,000	3,500	3,500	3,500
Motor trades	1,750	1,500	1,750	1,750	1,750
Wholesale	2,000	2,250	2,500	2,250	2,500
Retail	7,000	7,000	7,000	6,000	6,000
Transport & storage (inc postal)	4,500	4,500	5,000	6,000	5,000
Accommodation & food services	4,000	4,000	4,500	4,000	4,000
Information & communication	2,000	2,000	1,500	1,500	1,250
Financial & insurance	5,000	6,000	4,500	4,000	4,000
Property	800	1,000	1,250	1,250	1,250
Professional, scientific & technical	3,500	4,000	3,500	4,000	3,500
Business administration & support services	7,000	7,000	7,000	6,000	7,000
Public administration & defence	5,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000
Education	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000
Health	13,000	12,000	13,000	14,000	13,000
Arts, entertainment, recreation & other services	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,500
Total	71,150	72,285	73,575	73,035	72,040

- 5.5 Employment has remained broadly stable since 2020, fluctuating between 71,000 and 74,000 jobs. Health, retail, business services, education and public administration remain major employment sectors. Growth has occurred in transport and storage, construction and property sectors, while employment has declined in retail, finance and information and communication activities. Overall, the data indicates a diverse and resilient employment base.

Economy and employment – key findings

- Ipswich continues to function as Suffolk's principal employment centre.
- Employment levels are strong, but wages remain below Suffolk and regional averages.
- The local economy is diverse, but some sectoral changes are occurring across transport and storage, construction, property, finance and information and communication.

⁷ **Source:** Office for National Statistics (ONS), NOMIS

6 Housing

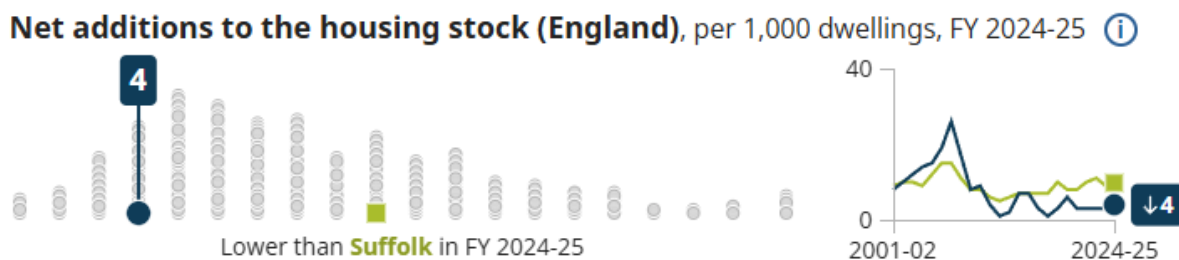
- 6.1 In 2025/26, 560 homes were completed in Ipswich. Of these, 450 (80.4%) were built on previously developed land and 359 (64.1%) were located within the IP-One area. The 207 affordable homes delivered represented 37.0% of completions, exceeding the Core Strategy 2018–2036 target of 15%.
- 6.2 The housing completion totals for 2024/25 and 2025/26 include assisted living units.
- 6.3 In 2024/25, 275 homes were completed in Ipswich. Of these, 233 (84.7%) were built on previously developed land and 133 (48.4%) were located within the IP-One area. The 102 affordable homes delivered represented 37.1% of completions, exceeding the 15% target set by the Core Strategy 2018–2036.
- 6.4 Against the 2022 Local Plan's stepped requirement of 300 dwellings per annum, completions were above it in 2025/26, when 560 homes were delivered, but below the requirement in 2024/25, at 275 homes.

Table 5: Housing delivery in Ipswich 2016-2026.

Year	New Homes	Previously Developed Land		Affordable Homes		Within IP-One area	
			%		%		%
2016 – 2017	256	211	82.4	4	1.6	109	42.6
2017 – 2018	141	133	94.3	20	14.2	71	50.5
2018 – 2019	223	171	76.7	9	4.0	77	35
2019 – 2020	421	356	84.6	35	8.3	229	54.4
2020 – 2021	317	282	90.0	47	14.8	102	32.2
2021 – 2022	171	159	93.0	34	19.9	98	57.3
2022 – 2023	192	128	66.7	18	9.4	129	67.2
2023 – 2024	211	148	70.1	7	3.3	104	49.3
2024 – 2025	275	233	84.7	102	37.1	133	48.4
2025 – 2026	560	450	80.4	207	37.0	359	64.1
<i>including Assisted Living units</i>							

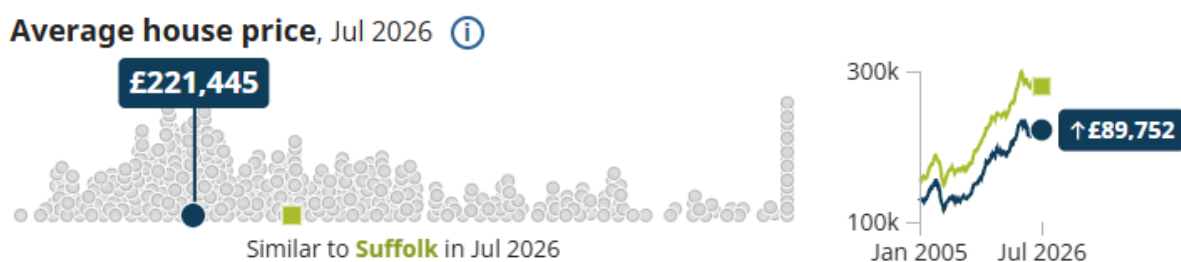
- 6.5 Housing delivery in Ipswich has reduced over the long term. In 2024/25, net additions were 4 dwellings per 1,000 existing dwellings, less than half the rate recorded across Suffolk and below the East of England average.

Figure 9: Net additions to housing stock over time 2001-2024 for Ipswich and Suffolk (ONS)



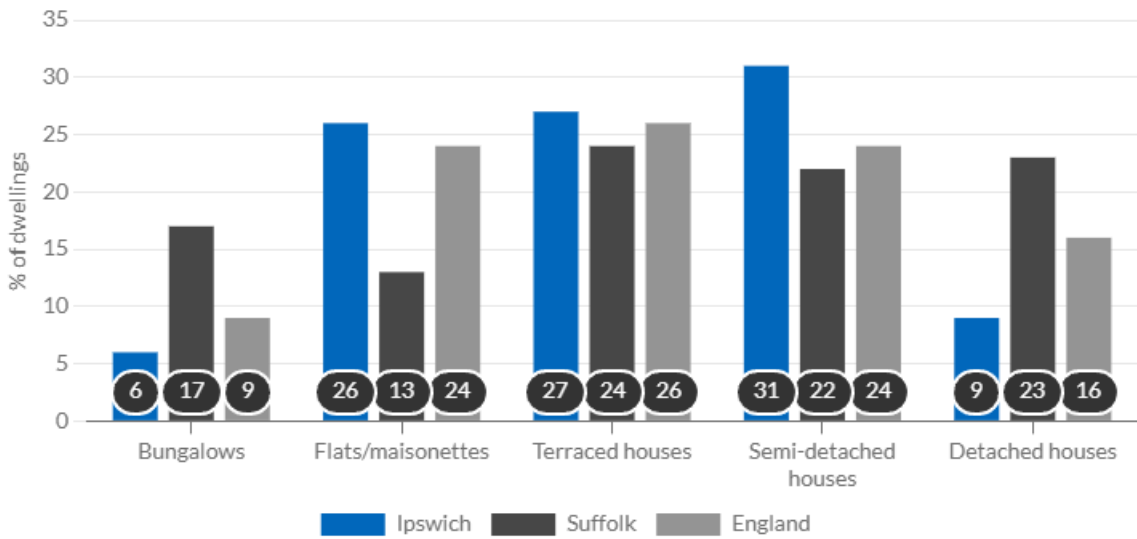
- 6.6 The average house price in Ipswich was £221,445 in July 2026, this has increased by roughly £90,000 since 2005. While this is an increase of around 70%, it remains below the averages of Suffolk at £280,742 and the East of England at £337,518. The difference in prices is significant; Ipswich prices are 21% lower than Suffolk and 34% lower than the East of England.

Figure 10: Average house price over time 2005-2026 for Ipswich and Suffolk (ONS)



- 6.7 Housing affordability is also relatively more affordable in Ipswich, at a ratio of 6.55 times earnings in 2025 against ratios of 7.66 and 8.52 for Suffolk and the East of England respectively. Affordability has however worsened over time, with the ratio increasing from 4.69 earnings in 2002, which is a 39.7% decrease in affordability.
- 6.8 Ipswich's housing stock contains a greater proportion of flats/maisonettes, terraced and semi-detached housing than Suffolk, reflecting its urban character. Detached and larger homes make up a smaller proportion of the stock than both Suffolk and England.

Figure 11: % Dwelling counts by type 2025 for Ipswich, Suffolk and England Source: Suffolk Observatory



6.9 Figures 12 and 13 below show household size in Ipswich are broadly comparable to the national picture. One-person households are slightly more common than in Suffolk, while larger households occur more frequently than the County average.

Figure 12: Households with 1-4 people 2021 for Ipswich, Suffolk and England

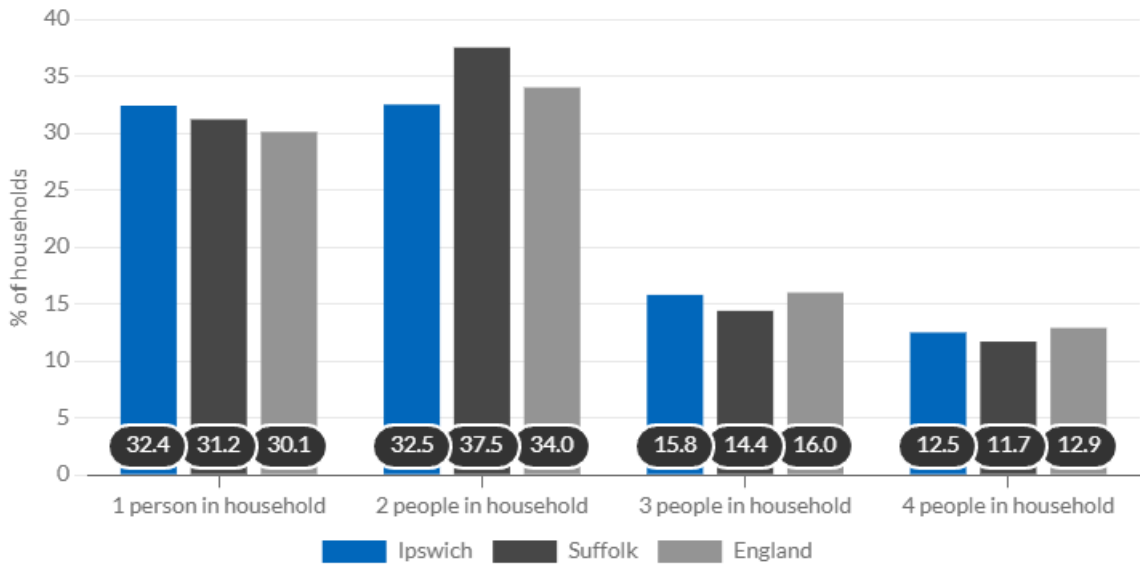


Figure 13: Households with 5 or more people 2021 for Ipswich, Suffolk and England

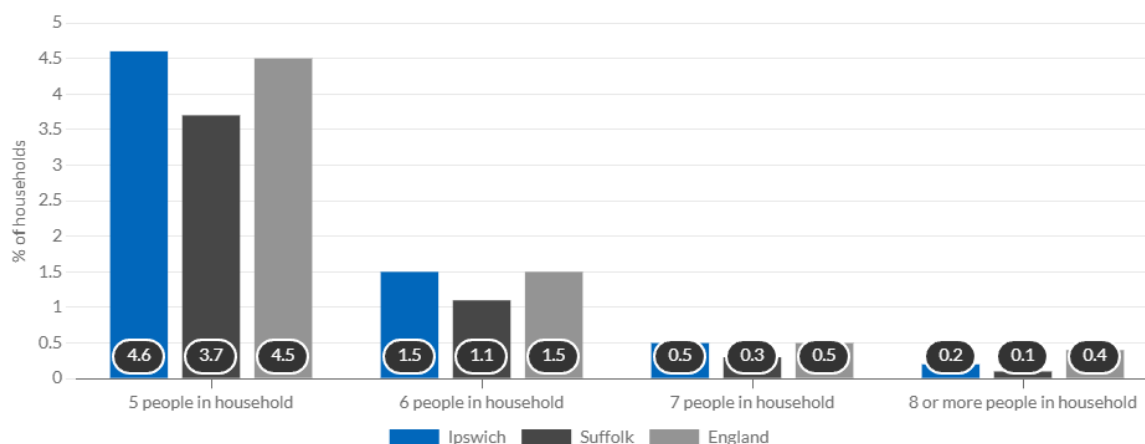
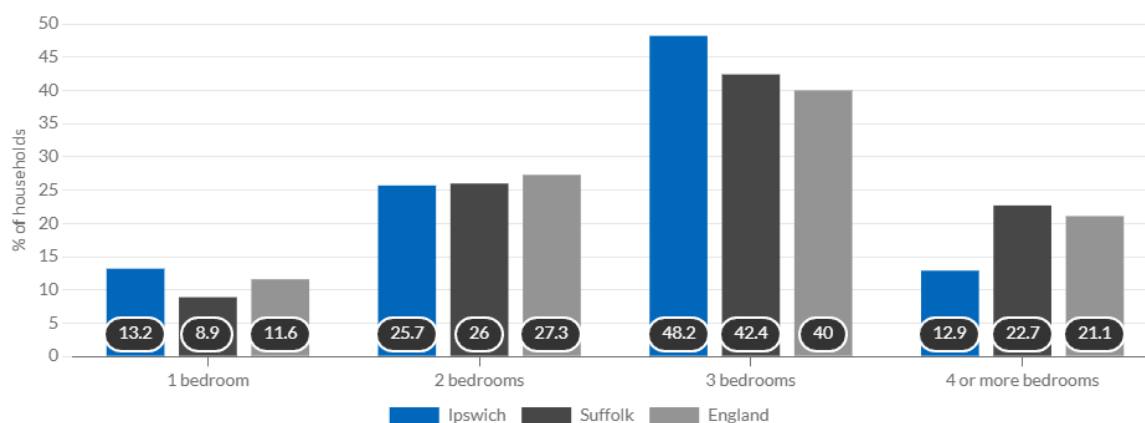
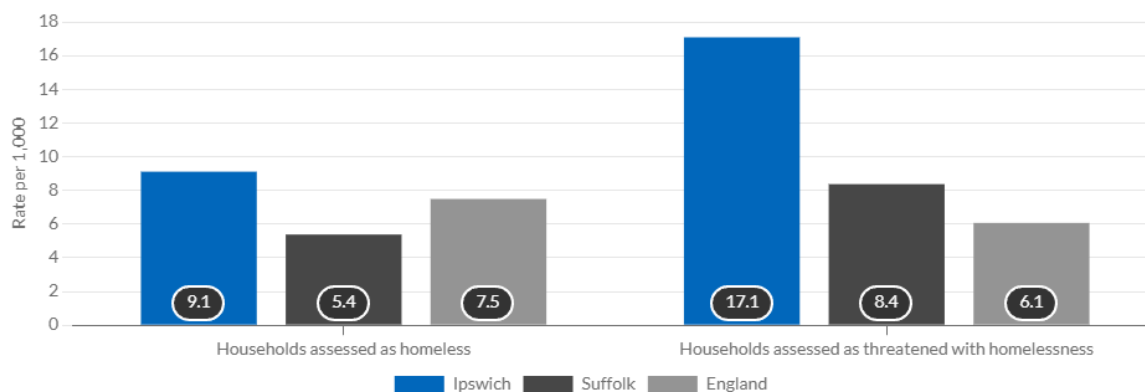


Figure 14: Households by number of bedrooms 2021 for Ipswich, Suffolk and England



- 6.10 Three-bedroom homes are a large proportion of the housing stock in Ipswich and are more common than in Suffolk or England. Ipswich also has a relatively high proportion of 1 bed accommodation, while larger homes with four or more bedrooms are more uncommon.

Figure 15: Homelessness across Ipswich, Suffolk and England

- 6.11 Ipswich experiences higher levels of homelessness pressure than both Suffolk and England. In 2024/25 Ipswich recorded 9.1 households per 1,000 assessed as homeless, significantly above the Suffolk average of 5.4 per 1,000 and higher than the England average of 7.5 per 1,000, indicating a greater proportion of households progress into homelessness despite prevention interventions. Additionally, 17.1 households per 1,000 were assessed as threatened with homelessness, more than double the Suffolk rate of 8.4 per 1,000 and almost three times the England rate of 6.1 per 1,000.

Table 6 below estimates the total housing supply within the Ipswich Borough Council administrative area in the emerging plan-making cycle. It has been prepared to support joint working on strategic planning issues as part of the Ipswich Strategic Planning Area (ISPA) Board (or any successor Suffolk-wide entity) and to inform planning for meeting the strategic housing needs of the area. The expected housing shortfall in the Borough is anticipated to be between 4,900-11,900 dwellings.

Table 6: Residual housing need and supply in Ipswich - April 2025⁸

Indicator		Dwellings*
a	Annual housing need target (standard method June 25)	714
b	Total local housing need requirement (2026-2045) (a x 19 years)	13,600
c	2025 net extant planning permissions	3,200
d	2025 extant planning permissions – windfall sites total	100
e	2025 extant planning permissions – windfall sites n/s	0
f	2025 extant planning permissions – windfall sites u/c	100
g	Local Plan 2022 gross allocations capacity	8,400

⁸ **Source:** Suffolk Observatory

Indicator		Dwellings*
h	Local Plan 2022 – total residual allocations	7,600
i	Local Plan 2022 residual allocations – site n/s	6,000
j	Local Plan 2022 residual allocations – site u/c	1,600
k	<i>Future windfall estimate (n/s) (50 dwellings per annum x 19 years)</i>	1,000
l	2025 total committed housing supply (u/c) (f + j)	1,700
m	<i>% of local housing need which is committed housing supply at 2025 (l / b x 100)</i>	12.5%
n	2025 total identified housing supply (deliverable supply will be identified from 5HLS supply) (u/c and n/s) (e + f + i + j)	8,700
o	<i>% of local housing need which is identified housing supply at 2025 (n / b x 100)</i>	64%
p	2026-2045 estimated shortfall range against identified housing need (b – l) and (b – n)	4,900 – 11,900

**all figures rounded other than standard method - may not sum due to rounding*

Gypsy and traveller plot delivery

- 6.12 Existing provision is concentrated within the Borough is focussed on the West Meadow site and a smaller privately-owned site at Henniker Road. A subsequent review undertaken in 2020 indicated that additional pitch provision and changes at West Meadow had met the need identified for the first five years of the assessment period, resulting in an outstanding requirement for 13 pitches between 2021 – 2036. The assessment also identified a need for transit provision across the wider Suffolk area, whilst no need was identified for travelling showpiece accommodation within Ipswich.
- 6.13 A new GTAA is currently being prepared and will form part of the evidence base for the emerging Local Plan. The updated assessment will feature an up-to-date understanding of accommodation needs and future pitch requirements within the Borough.

Housing – key findings

- Housing need in the Borough exceeds identified supply, with a potential total housing shortfall of approximately 4,900 to 11,900 dwellings.
- Brownfield development continues to contribute significantly to delivery.

- Housing affordability has worsened over time but remains below Suffolk average.
- Homelessness pressures in Ipswich are higher than County and National averages.

7 Key infrastructure

- 7.1 Table 7 below is an excerpt from the Local Plan which contains the major infrastructure proposals for the Borough. The excerpt is from the most recent AMR and provides updates on major transport infrastructure proposals.

Table 7: Updates on Major Transport Infrastructure Proposals

Major Transport Infrastructure Proposals	
Scheme	Status
A14 Junction Improvements	J55 - No longer a RIS3 pipeline scheme, pushed back into 2030s. National Highways no longer working on the scheme due to RIS programme being under review.
Junction 55 Copdock	J56 - Delivered on site by developer, linked to new Petrol Filling Station.
Junction 56 Wherstead	J57 - No proposals currently present in RIS pipeline. Unlikely to progress during life of Local Plan.
Junction 57 Nacton	J58 - This forms part of the SCC MRN A12 scheme, this will upgrade the A12 from the A14 to Melton. Delivery anticipated for 2027, if funded by DfT.
Junction 58 Seven Hills	
Measures to increase capacity on A1214	No measured progress.
Sustainable transport measures	The Quality Bus Partnership was delivered and subsequently upgraded to an Enhanced Bus Partnership following its success. Ipswich specific schemes that were delivered as a result of the partnership include new services from Bramford to Ipswich. Negotiations ongoing for schemes not mentioned.
Infrastructure improvements to support sustainable transport measures	No measured progress.
Link road through site IP029	Currently under construction, predicted completion April 2025.
Wet Dock Crossing	Scheme currently paused, remains Local Plan proposal.
Prince Philip Bridge – Wet Dock Crossing 2	While this was not a Local Plan scheme, it has been included for information. This Wet Dock Crossing is the pedestrian and cycle bridge across the lock gates at the southern end of the Island Site. An assessment is currently taking place of the existing Lock Bridge and routes to bridge. Design and planning to follow next year.

- 7.2 The latest position on these schemes will be published in the IBC 2026 AMR and will be reviewed alongside the production of the emerging Local Plan.

Key infrastructure – key findings

- Delivery of strategic infrastructure will be a key theme for the Local Plan
- Infrastructure planning will be crucial to supporting future development.

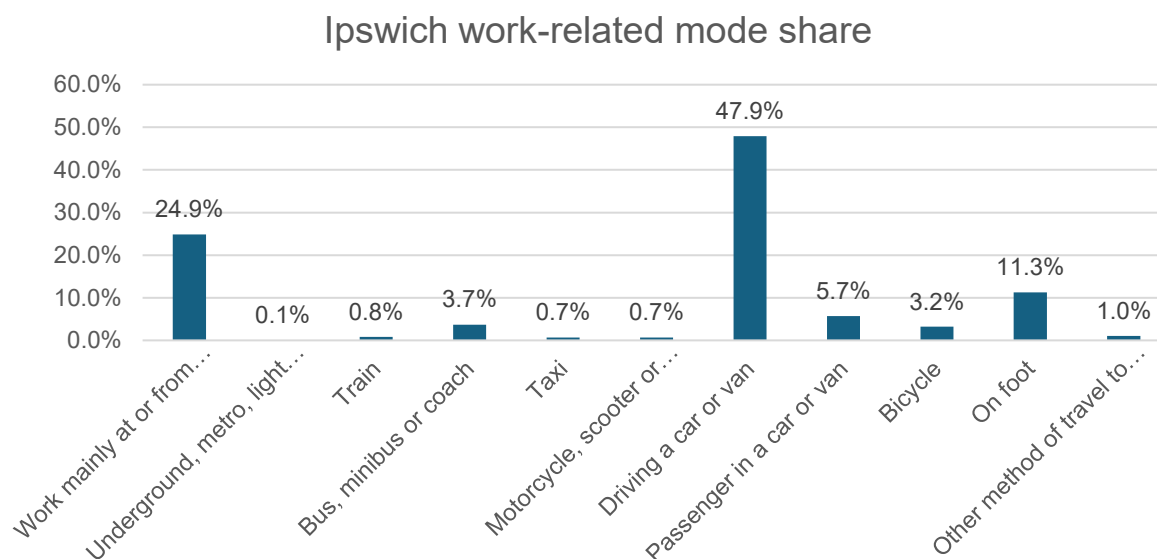
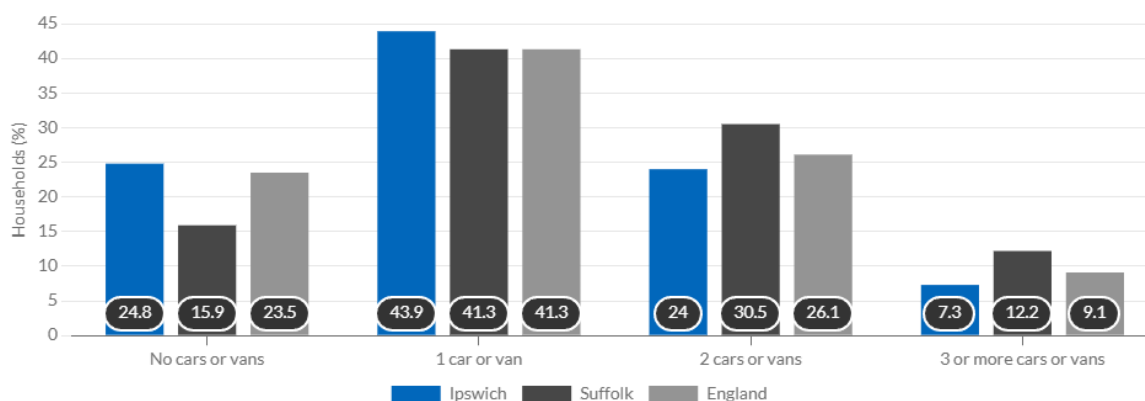
8 Transport

- 8.1 Table 8 and Figure 17 show the results of the travel to work survey from the 2021 Census. Driving a car or van is the largest share at 47.9%. Homeworking accounts for 24.9%, while walking and cycling together account for 14.5%. Public transport (rail, underground/tram and bus/coach) represents 4.6% of the method of travel.
- 8.2 These figures should be interpreted cautiously given the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on travel behaviour time of the Census.

Table 8: Method used to travel to workplace⁹

Method of travel to workplace (Census 2021)	Count	%
Work mainly at or from home	16,664	24.9
Underground, metro, light rail, tram	34	0.1
Train	559	0.8
Bus, minibus or coach	2,478	3.7
Taxi	461	0.7
Motorcycle, scooter or moped	451	0.7
Driving a car or van	32,133	47.9
Passenger in a car or van	3,843	5.7
Bicycle	2,141	3.2
On foot	7,573	11.3
Other method of travel to work	691	1.0
Total: All usual residents aged 16 years and over in employment the week before the census	67,028	100.0

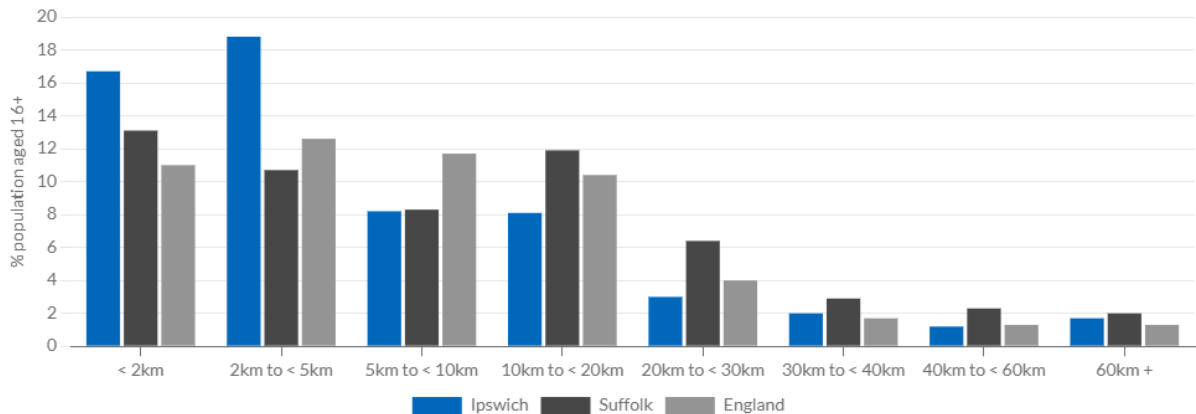
⁹ Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS), NOMIS

Figure 16: Percentage split of Ipswich work modal share**Figure 17: Car and Van ownership in Ipswich, Suffolk and England**

8.3 Figure 17 of Census 2021 data shows that car and van ownership remains widespread in Ipswich, with around three-quarters of households having access to at least one vehicle. Of the Borough's 59,507 households, 26,122 (43.9%) had access to one car or van, while a further 18,621 (31.3%) had access to two or more vehicles.

8.4 However, Ipswich also has a relatively large proportion of households without access to a car or van in comparison to the County and National averages. In 2021, 14,764 households (24.8%) reported no vehicle availability, equivalent to approximately one in four households, in comparison to 15.9% across Suffolk and 23.5% nationally.

Figure 18: Travel to work distances for Ipswich, Suffolk and England



- 8.5 Census 2021 data indicates that commuting distances are relatively short, with over one-third of working residents travelling less than 5km to work. Homeworking also accounted for approximately 25% of employed residents at the time of the Census.
- 8.6 The DfT Connectivity Tool provides an indication of how easily residents can access employment, education, healthcare and leisure opportunities by sustainable transport modes. The following maps illustrate relative accessibility across the Borough.

Figure 19: Scoring matrix for Connectivity Tool

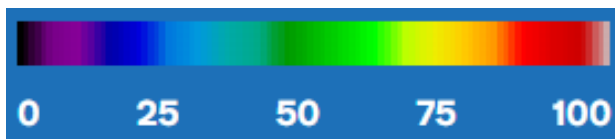


Figure 20: Relative employment connectivity across Ipswich



Figure 21: Relative education connectivity across Ipswich

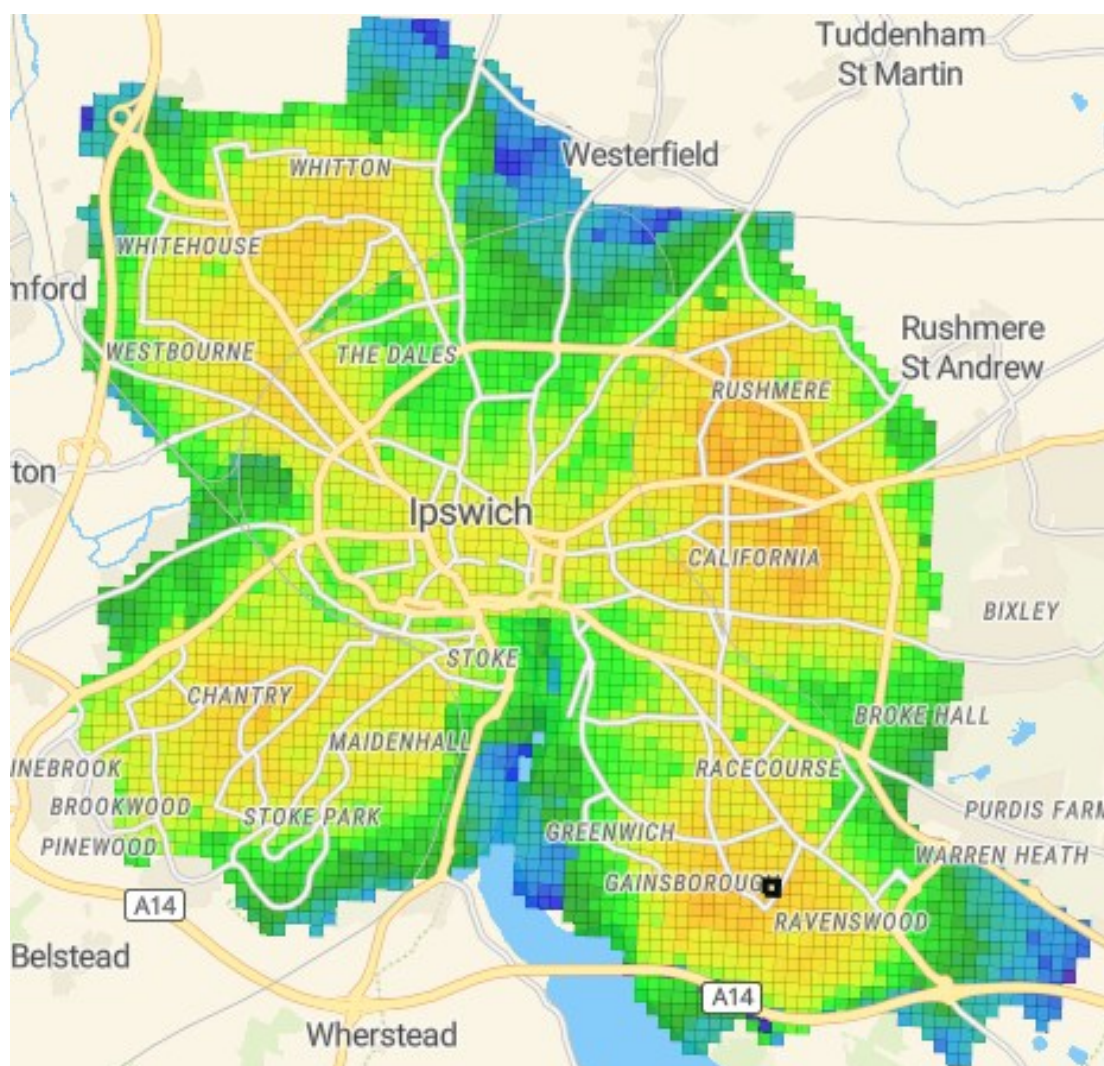


Figure 22: Relative healthcare connectivity across Ipswich

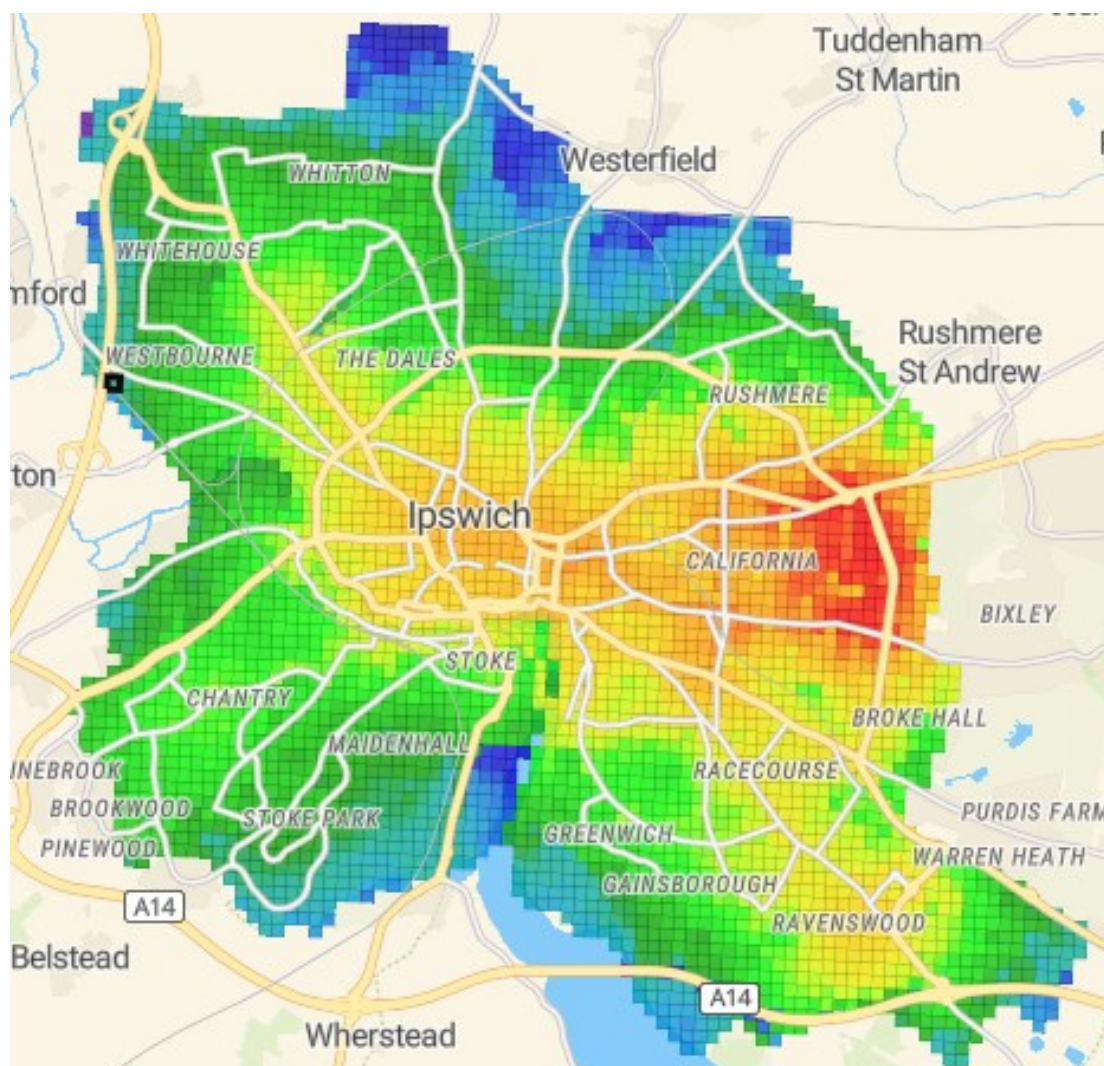
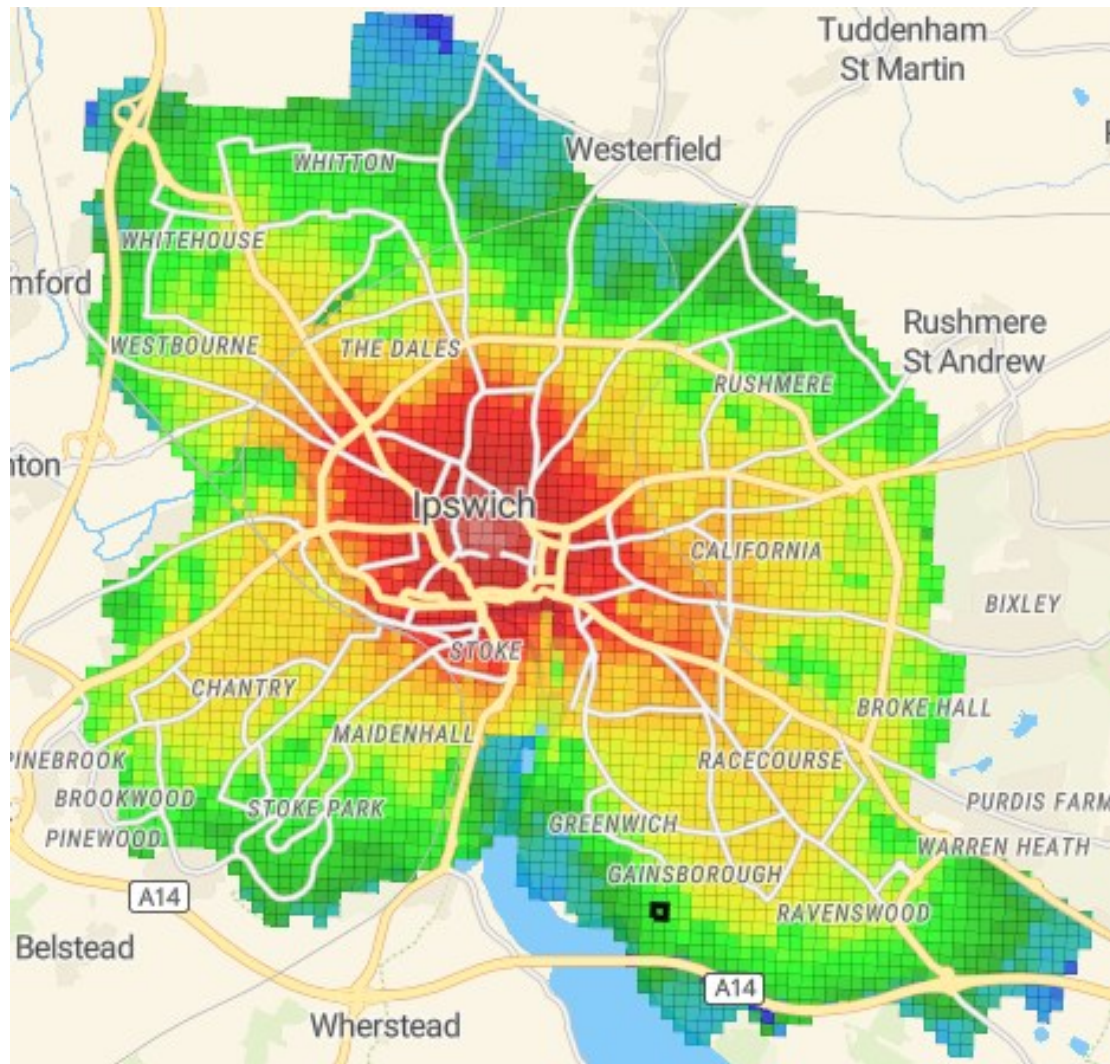


Figure 23: Relative leisure connectivity across Ipswich

Transport –key findings

- The private car remains the dominant mode of transport
- Journeys for work are relatively short and present opportunities for walking and cycling.
- Ipswich benefits from generally good accessibility to employment and key services.

9 Digital connectivity

Table 9: Fixed and mobile network levels across Ipswich, Suffolk and East of England¹⁰

Indicator	Ipswich	Suffolk	East of England	Ipswich vs Suffolk	Ipswich vs East of England
Gigabit-capable broadband	96.5%	82.2%	85.8%	+14.3 pp	+10.7 pp
4G coverage	100.0%	99.98%	99.99%	+0.02 pp	+0.01 pp
5G coverage	100.0%	88.98%	95.94%	+11.02 pp	+4.06 pp
Premises below 30Mbps	0.3%	1.7%	1.7%	-1.4 pp	-1.4 pp

- 9.1 Ipswich benefits from excellent digital connectivity, outperforming both Suffolk and the East of England across both broadband and mobile coverage indicators. Gigabit availability is particularly good, while 4&5G coverage is effectively universal across the Borough.

Digital connectivity – key findings

- Ipswich has excellent broadband infrastructure and mobile connectivity
- Digital infrastructure performs significantly better than County and regional averages.
- Digital connectivity represents a key economic and social advantage for the Borough.

¹⁰ **Source:** Office for National Statistics (ONS)

10 Environment

Biodiversity

- 10.1 Ipswich contains biodiversity assets of international, national and local importance. The Orwell Estuary is the Borough's most significant environmental asset, forming part of the Stour and Orwell Estuaries SPA and Ramsar Site. A wider network of SSSI's, County Wildlife Sites and Local Nature Reserves contribute to biodiversity and ecological connectivity across the Borough and neighbouring areas.

Table 10: Biodiversity Designations within Ipswich

Designation	Number of Sites	Area (ha)
SPA/Ramsar	1	41.27
SSSI	3	47.47
County Wildlife Sites	20	266.87
Local Nature Reserves	9	49.84
Ancient Woodland	2	3.58

Table 11: Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

SSSI	Area (ha)	Key Interest
Orwell Estuary	1,335.53	Estuarine habitats and overwintering birds
Bixley Heath	5.08	Lowland heath, fen and swamp habitats
Stoke Tunnel Cutting	2.20	Geological interest

- 10.2 Several designated sites are reported as being In unfavourable condition, highlighting the need for ongoing habitat management.
- 10.3 Ipswich has also established an Ecological Network and Wildlife Network that seek to maintain and strengthen habitat connectivity across the urban area. The Borough's ambition is further demonstrated through its Tree City of the World status and target of achieving 22% tree canopy cover by 2050. Three wards, Gainsborough, St Margaret's and Stoke Park, have already achieved this target.

Biodiversity – key findings

- Internationally designated habitats present a significant environmental constraint
- Habitat protection and enhancement will remain a key consideration
- Ecological connectivity and biodiversity net gain provide opportunities for environmental improvement.

Green infrastructure

- 10.4 Green infrastructure is one of Ipswich's strongest environmental assets. Despite its compact urban form, the Borough contains an extensive network of parks, recreation spaces, natural greenspaces and informal open land.

Table 12: Green Infrastructure Assets

Asset Type	Quantity (ha)
Open Space, Sport and Recreation Land	518
Local Nature Reserves	9
Play Areas	93
Allotment Sites	16

- 10.5 Green infrastructure supports recreation, health, biodiversity, climate adaptation and flood management across the Borough.
- 10.6 Accessibility to green infrastructure varies across Ipswich, evidence suggests some areas benefit from greater access to open space than others.

Green infrastructure – Key findings

- The Borough benefits from an extensive range of parks, open spaces and greenspaces.
- Green Infrastructure plays an increasingly important role in health, biodiversity and climate resilience, especially in an urban authority.
- Accessibility to greenspace is uneven across Ipswich.

Water and flood risk

- 10.7 Ipswich's environmental character is heavily influenced by water. The Borough lies within the Anglian River Basin District and East Suffolk Catchment and is located within one of the most water-stressed regions of England.

- 10.8 The River Gipping enters the Borough from the west before becoming the River Orwell in the town centre and widening into the Orwell Estuary. These watercourses support ecological value, recreational opportunities and the historic development of the town but also create important flood risk constraints.
- 10.9 Recent evidence highlights increasing pressure on water resources across East Anglia. Drought conditions experienced during recent years have resulted in some of the lowest river levels recorded since the 1970s, emphasising the importance of water efficiency and long-term resilience measures.
- 10.10 Flood risk remains one of the most significant environmental issues facing Ipswich.

Table 13: Ipswich Tidal Flood Defence Infrastructure

Indicator	Value
Homes Protected	Over 2,400
Businesses Protected	Over 300
Flood Wall Length	Approx. 1 km
Operational Since	2018

- 10.11 While the majority of the Borough lies within Flood Zone 1, substantial areas adjacent to the Orwell and Gipping corridors fall within Flood Zones 2 and 3. Large parts of the waterfront and riverside corridor therefore remain sensitive to flood risk.
- 10.12 The Ipswich Tidal Barrier provides significant protection against tidal flooding, although surface water flood risk remains an issue in several parts of the Borough, particularly during periods of intense rainfall.

Water and flood risk – key findings

- Flood risk is a major constraint, especially in the waterfront area of the Town Centre.
- Climate change is likely to increase pressures on water resources.
- New development should support water efficiency and flood resilience.

Air Quality

- 10.13 Air quality remains an environmental challenge concentrated around Ipswich's principal transport corridors. Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), predominantly from road traffic, remains the principal pollutant of concern.

Table 14: Air Quality Management Areas

AQMA	Location
AQMA 2	Crown Street, St Margaret's Street and St Helen's Street
AQMA 3	Waterfront and Wet Dock Area
AQMA 5	Norwich Road and St Matthew's Street

10.14 All three AQMAs are associated with major traffic corridors, where congestion contributes to poor air quality. Improving air quality will remain a key consideration in the next Local Plan.

10.15 Whilst improvements in vehicle technology and adoption of electric vehicles are expected to improve conditions over time, transport-related emissions remain an important environmental consideration for future growth.

Air quality –key findings

- Air quality remains a challenge in the Borough but is improving.
- Traffic related emissions continue to affect areas of the Town Centre.

Climate change and emissions

10.16 Ipswich Borough Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and has committed to achieving carbon neutrality within its own operations by 2030.

Table 15: Greenhouse Gas Emissions Trends 2005-2023

Year	Total Emissions (ktCO ₂ e)	Per Capita (tCO ₂ e)
2005	746.0	6.0
2010	653.8	5.0
2015	488.4	3.5
2020	357.5	2.6
2023	321.2	2.3

10.17 Between 2005 and 2023:

- Total emissions reduced by approximately 57%.
- Per-capita emissions reduced by approximately 62%.

Table 16: Emissions by Sector (2023)

Sector	Emissions (ktCO ₂ e)
Domestic	127.7
Transport	108.8
Commercial	42.2
Public Sector	21.7
Industry	18.6

10.18 Domestic energy use and transport remain the largest sources of emissions within Ipswich and will be central to future decarbonisation efforts. Renewable energy deployment has increased significantly over the last decade, particularly through increased uptake in solar panels across the Borough.

Climate change and emissions – key findings

- Emissions have reduced significantly.
- Domestic energy use and transport remain the greatest source of emissions. Climate adaptation should continue to be a focus of the plan-making process.

11 Informing the plan vision

- 11.1 This baseline data report provides an evidence-based overview of the social, economic and environmental characteristics of Ipswich and identifies a range of issues, challenges and opportunities that may need to be addressed through the new Local Plan.
- 11.2 The report does not seek to reach definitive conclusions at this stage. Rather, it establishes a foundation for the next phases of plan preparation by bringing together available information, monitoring findings and consultation feedback to inform the Council's understanding of the Borough and the matters likely to influence its future growth and development.
- 11.3 The wider baseline presented throughout this report will play a role in developing the vision for the new Local Plan, helping to identify the outcomes the Council wants to achieve over the plan period. It will also inform future stages of plan-making, including the consideration of strategic priorities, options and approaches for meeting Ipswich's needs.
- 11.4 The baseline evidence identifies a number of important considerations for the emerging Local Plan, particularly those related to the critical analysis prompts put forward by MHCLG (Gathering baselining information to inform a local plan¹¹); this includes: the effectiveness of the current spatial strategy, the performance of existing allocations, and the extent to which future housing, employment, infrastructure and environmental challenges can be addressed through the existing approach to growth. The evidence also provides a basis for assessing whether maintaining the current spatial strategy would be sufficient to address these challenges, and whether planned investment, environmental constraints and emerging development opportunities may necessitate refinements to the spatial strategy over the plan period. These considerations will help inform the future direction of the Local Plan and the evidence required to support it
- 11.5 As work on the new Local Plan progresses, the Council's understanding of these matters will continue to evolve through further analysis, engagement and consultation. The themes identified in this report should therefore be viewed as an initial assessment which will be tested and refined to ensure that the emerging Local Plan is based on a robust and up-to-date understanding of Ipswich's needs, challenges and opportunities.

¹¹ [Gathering baselining information to inform a local plan - GOV.UK](#)

12 Appendix 1 – Data sources and evidence base

Source	Link
Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) – Greenhouse Gas Statistics Collection	Greenhouse Gas Statistics Collection
Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) – Local Authority Greenhouse Gas Emissions Statistics	Local Authority and Regional Greenhouse Gas Emissions Statistics
Department for Transport (DfT) – Connectivity Tool	Connectivity Tool
Department for Transport (DfT) – Connectivity Tool Lite	Connectivity Tool Lite
English Indices of Deprivation – Official Statistics	English Indices of Deprivation 2025
Environment Agency – Flood Map for Planning	Flood Map for Planning
Environment Agency – Flood Risk Service	Check Long-Term Flood Risk
Ipswich Borough Council – Air Quality Management	Air Quality Management
Ipswich Borough Council – Authority Monitoring Reports	Authority Monitoring Reports
Ipswich Borough Council – Monitoring Evidence Hub	Monitoring Evidence Hub
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) – Local Deprivation Explorer	Local Deprivation Explorer
Natural England – Designated Sites Search	Designated Sites Search
Natural England – Mapping and Data Guidance	How to Access Natural England's Maps and Data
Natural England – Open Data Geoportal	Open Data Geoportal

NOMIS – Labour Market and Census Data	NOMIS
Ofcom – Broadband and Mobile Coverage Checker	Ofcom Coverage Checker
Ofcom – Connected Nations Reports	Connected Nations Reports
Office for National Statistics (ONS) – Population Data	ONS Population Estimates
Office for National Statistics (ONS) – Population Projections	ONS Population Projections
Suffolk Observatory	Suffolk Observatory