



# Ipswich Borough Council

## Gateway 1 Self-Assessment Summary

October 2026



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## 1. How we got ready to prepare a new Local Plan

- 1.1 Ipswich Borough Council (the Council) formally started preparing a new Local Plan for Ipswich on 26 October 2026, when it passed through Gateway 1.
- 1.2 Government policy says the Council should adopt the new plan within 30 months of this date. This is to help ensure the Council has an up-to-date Local Plan that responds to the needs of the area and its communities.
- 1.3 This page explains the work undertaken to get ready to meet the 30-month timeframe. It also has links to further information and where you can get updates.
- 1.4 The Council maintains all documents, data, timetables and latest information related to the Local Plan on its website. All published information is available here - [New Ipswich Local Plan](#).

## 2. We published a timetable for preparing the plan

- 2.1 The timetable shows when the Council expects to carry out the different stages and activities for preparing a plan. It helps the Council check if and how it can adopt the plan within the 30-month timeframe. The timetable will be kept updated as plan preparation progresses.
- 2.2 The Council prepared and published its [Local Plan Timetable](#), in accordance with the data standard, and [Notice of Intention to Commence Local Plan Preparation](#) on 25 June 2026.
- 2.3 The timetable shows how we will prepare and adopt the plan within 30 months but there are significant risks to this. The Local Plan Project Initiation Document (PID) has identified the key risks and processes for addressing them. Progress will be monitored through plan preparation and the timetable reviewed where necessary.

## 3. We established project management and governance arrangements

- 3.1 Preparing a Local Plan is a complex process. It involves many people across the Council and from other organisations. Thinking early about how the work is planned, managed and signed off helps monitor progress and keep the work on track. It also helps anticipate and manage any risks to adopting the plan within 30 months.
- 3.2 The Council has prepared a Local Plan PID which provides the overarching project management framework for the preparation of the Local Plan.
- 3.3 The Local Plan PID brings together the proposed project management arrangements, governance and decision-making routes, Local Plan programme, resource requirements and budget considerations. These have been considered against the timetable for preparing the Local Plan to identify the resources and arrangements required to support delivery.
- 3.4 Key risks have been embedded within the Local Plan PID. The identified risks will be reviewed throughout the plan-making process and the risks updated accordingly to

reflect changes in circumstances, emerging risks and any additional mitigation required.

- 3.5 All published information is available here - [New Ipswich Local Plan](#).

## 4. We planned how we'll consult on the plan

- 4.1 Public consultation is essential for the Local Plan to represent the needs of communities. It must be easy for people to have their say in a way that works for them, so they can influence the way the area develops. By planning this early, the Council can ensure people are aware in advance and can get involved from the start.
- 4.2 The Council has undertaken a scoping consultation to get people's views on what the plan could contain and proposals to consult on the plan at key stages.
- 4.3 The Council used the scoping consultation to help prepare an Engagement Strategy for the new Local Plan, having regard to relevant government guidance<sup>1</sup> and relevant Council strategies and guidance.
- 4.4 The Engagement Strategy establishes a clear and proportionate framework for engagement throughout the plan-making process. The strategy sets out a digital-first approach, complemented by traditional and non-digital methods to provide different ways for people to participate. The approach has been informed by Ipswich's demographic profile and feedback from the Scoping Consultation, including consideration of groups that may experience barriers to engagement.
- 4.5 All published information is available here - [New Ipswich Local Plan](#).

## 5. We began scoping the content of the plan

- 5.1 Scoping includes considering how well the existing plan is working and gathering baseline information about the area. This helps to identify future needs and ambitions. Starting this early means the Council can begin preparing the new plan with a clear vision, making it quicker and easier to consult on the plan and make decisions about it.
- 5.2 Locally specific issues and priorities have been identified through the Local Plan Scoping Consultation, together with targeted engagement with underrepresented groups undertaken during summer 2025. This has provided a strong understanding of the matters that are important to Ipswich's communities.
- 5.3 The Council publishes an [Authority Monitoring Report](#) each year which tracks progress against the objectives and policies of the adopted Local Plan. This Local Plan monitoring and the early baseline evidence have been used to identify areas where progress has been sustained and where performance has remained static or declined, enabling the new Local Plan to respond to identified delivery challenges.
- 5.4 The Council has also commissioned an independent Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The SEA Scoping Report and associated consultation establish the environmental, social and economic baseline, identify key sustainability issues and will inform and refine the scope of the plan.

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<sup>1</sup> [Engaging the public when preparing a local plan - GOV.UK](#)

- 5.5 The scope will also reflect the Council's priorities as set out in the Corporate Strategy, alongside national policy and government priorities. Together, the Local Plan PID, early baseline evidence, monitoring evidence, community engagement and SEA process provide a clear and robust basis for defining the scope of the new Local Plan.
- 5.6 A number of studies have been commissioned and are underway, while project briefs have been prepared for evidence base studies to progress in accordance with the Local Plan Timetable. The Council's specific studies include evidence on future retail needs, land supply, heritage and conservation and environmental assessment.
- 5.7 Several strategic evidence base studies have been commissioned on a joint basis with other Suffolk local planning authorities. This approach provides a consistent evidence base across Suffolk and supports the effective consideration of strategic matters and cross-boundary matters. These joint studies include evidence on future housing and economic needs (including Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs), water resources and transport assessment.
- 5.8 Using all of the above sources, the Council has begun developing a draft vision. This will be refined as the plan preparation progresses and further evidence and engagement are undertaken. The development of high-level options and policies will begin soon informed by the draft vision and evidence base collected.
- 5.9 All published information is available here - [New Ipswich Local Plan](#).

## 6. We began a Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 6.1 The Council is legally required to identify, describe and evaluate likely significant effects on the environment of:
- implementing the Local Plan; and
  - reasonable alternatives, taking into account the plan's objectives and scope.
- 6.2 This process will consider how community, national and international environmental protection objectives and any other environmental challenges are taken into account in the plan. It will help the Council to predict significant environmental effects and develop ways of preventing, reducing and offsetting these.
- 6.3 It is important the Council starts this work early and is transparent about doing the assessment when engaging stakeholders and communities.
- 6.4 The Council appointed consultants in May 2026 to prepare the SEA Scoping Report for the new Local Plan. The final report was completed in June 2026 and published for consultation alongside the Local Plan Scoping Consultation. This completes Stage A of the SEA process: setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and determining the scope of the assessment.
- 6.5 The SEA Scoping Report is available on the Council's website: [Ipswich Local Plan Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report](#).

## 7. How to stay up to date

- 7.1 Please join our mailing list to receive updates and be notified about future consultations. [Register online](#), or email your request to [planningpolicy@ipswich.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@ipswich.gov.uk).
- 7.2 The Council maintains all documents, data, timetables and latest information related to the Local Plan on its website. All published information is available here - [New Ipswich Local Plan | ipswich.gov.uk](#).