



Ipswich Borough Council

Readiness Checker for Gateway 1 Report

October 2026



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Introduction

Government guidance recommends the use of the official template readiness checker for Gateway 1 when local authorities are working towards passing through Gateway 1. The official template is a spreadsheet file which is also published on the Council website. This document has been produced as a report friendly accessible format which summarises the key information from the official template spreadsheet.

1. Legal requirements you must have met before proceeding

1.1 Preparing and publishing a timetable in line with the data standard, publishing notice of intention to commence and undertaking the scoping consultation

We have made the recommended progress

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.

The Council commenced its [Local Plan Scoping Consultation](#) on 8 July. The consultation ran for 8-weeks closing on 2 September 2026. A Strategic Environmental Assessment scoping consultation has been undertaken on the same dates.

The Council has therefore published the required notice and timetable and undertaken the statutory scoping consultation in accordance with the legal requirements.

2. Preparing and publishing a Local Plan timetable

2.1 Considering the expected time it will take to adopt the plan

We have started but have a bit more work to do to make the recommended progress

The Council has prepared and published a Local Plan timetable setting out the key stages and anticipated dates for adopting the new Local Plan. 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 process to address them. Progress will be monitored through plan preparation and the timetable reviewed where necessary.

3. Establishing project management and governance arrangements

3.1 Establishing appropriate project management, governance and resourcing to support the timetable

We have made the recommended progress

The Council has prepared a PID which provides the overarching project management framework for the preparation of the Local Plan.

The 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.

3.2 Testing and agreeing project management and governance internally

We have made the recommended progress

The proposed project management and governance arrangements have been developed in consultation with relevant officers and decision-makers across the Council.

The Local Plan PID brings these arrangements together including setting out roles and responsibilities, project management arrangements, governance and decision-making routes.

3.3 Establishing risk monitoring, management and mitigation

We have made the recommended progress

Key risks have been embedded within the Local Plan PID. This identifies the risks associated with preparation of the Local Plan and sets out the proposed approach to their management and mitigation.

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.

4. Consulting and engaging on the plan

4.1 Preparing an engagement strategy

We have made the recommended progress

The Council has prepared an Engagement Strategy for the new Local Plan, having regard to relevant government guidance¹ and relevant Council strategies and guidance. It establishes

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

a clear and proportionate framework for engagement throughout the plan-making process. The Engagement Strategy has been informed by feedback received through the Scoping Consultation and responds to Ipswich's demographic profile, and has been developed with advice and guidance from the Council's Communities, Information Governance and Legal teams.

4.2 Establishing processes for consultation and engagement

We have made the recommended progress

The Engagement 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.

4.3 Agreeing the engagement strategy internally

We have made the recommended progress

As delegated by Executive through decision [E/26/02](#) the Engagement Strategy has been formally approved by the Head of Planning and Economic Development, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Museums and Executive Director for Place, Operations and Communities.

5. Scoping the anticipated content of the plan

5.1 Defining the Scope of the plan

We have made the recommended progress

This is set out in the PID.

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.

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 has 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.

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.

The scope will also reflect the Council's priorities as set out in the Corporate Strategy, alongside national policy and government priorities. Together, the 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.

5.2 Drafting a vision for the plan

We have started but have a bit more work to do to make the recommended progress

The Council has used early baseline evidence and engagement activities to begin developing a draft vision for the new Local Plan.

This has included consideration of the key characteristics, issues and opportunities identified through the Council's baselining work, feedback received through the Local Plan Scoping Consultation, and recent town centre themed engagement events.

This work provides the starting point for developing the Local Plan vision, which will be refined as plan preparation progresses and further evidence and engagement are undertaken.

5.3 Considering how we will monitor progress towards the vision

We have started but have a bit more work to do to make the recommended progress

The Council has begun to consider how progress towards the emerging Local Plan vision will be monitored, although specific measurable outcomes and indicators have not yet been identified.

5.4 Gathering evidence to inform the new plan

We have made the recommended progress

The Council has identified the evidence required to support preparation of the new Local Plan through the PID. This establishes a clear and coordinated evidence programme covering the principal matters that will inform the new plan.

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.

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.

5.5 Calculating a housing requirement

We have made the recommended progress

The housing requirement for Ipswich has been calculated at 715 dwellings per annum, using the Government's standard method. This provides the starting point for preparing the new Local Plan, and the calculation will be kept under review while the plan is developed.

Work on a Housing Needs Assessment has commenced. This will identify the need for homes of different sizes, types and tenures, including affordable housing, to be accommodated over the plan period.

5.6 Exploring our high-level options and policies

We have started but have a bit more work to do to make the recommended progress

The Scoping Consultation has provided an early opportunity to identify issues, opportunities and priorities for the Borough and to inform the spatial and policy choices that will be explored as plan preparations progress.

6. Progressing the Strategic Environmental Assessment

Ipswich Borough Council appointed consultants in May 2026 to prepare the Strategic Environmental Assessment (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.

The SEA Scoping Report is available on the Council's website: [Ipswich Local Plan Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report, June 2026](#).

6.1 Identifying other plans and programmes

We have made the recommended progress

The Scoping Report reviews the international, national and sub-national plans, policies and programmes relevant to the new Local Plan. It identifies their relationship with the plan and incorporates their objectives and requirements into the SEA framework.

6.2 Collecting baseline information

We have made the recommended progress

A comprehensive baseline has been assembled covering biodiversity, population, human health, soils, water, air quality, climate change, material assets, cultural heritage, landscape and townscape. The report identifies current conditions, key trends, data limitations and the likely evolution of these matters without the new Local Plan.

6.3 Identifying environmental protection objectives

We have made the recommended progress

Relevant environmental protection objectives have been identified through the review of legislation and other plans and programmes. These objectives have directly informed the SEA framework and will ensure that environmental considerations are integrated into the preparation of the Local Plan.

6.4 Developing the scope of the SEA

We have made the recommended progress

The Scoping Report establishes the context, geographical coverage, key sustainability issues, assessment framework and proposed methodology for the SEA. Consultation with the Environment Agency, Historic England, Natural England and other stakeholders provides an opportunity to confirm and refine the scope before the assessment of reasonable alternatives and emerging plan content begins.

6.5 Developing SEA objectives

We have made the recommended progress

The Council has established 11 SEA objectives covering biodiversity and geodiversity; housing; health and health inequalities; soils and minerals; water; air quality; climate change; prosperity and growth; heritage; landscape and townscape; and waste management. Supporting appraisal questions have also been developed to provide a clear and consistent framework for assessing the Local Plan's spatial options, sites and policies.