

Ipswich Borough Council Local Plan

Topic Paper: Infrastructure Provision

Evidence on the infrastructure provision required in Ipswich Borough to 2031

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Introduction

What the Council is doing

1. The Council is currently preparing a review of its adopted Core Strategy and Policies development plan document (December 2011) and a Site Allocations and Policies (incorporating IP-One Area Action Plan) development plan document. These documents form the Council's Local Plan, which guides future development in the Borough.
2. Proposed submission versions of the two plans were published for public consultation on 12th December 2014, under regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. This followed informal consultation (under regulation 18) between January and March 2014.
3. The Core Strategy and Policies development plan document review (hereinafter referred to as the Core Strategy review) will replace the adopted Core Strategy and Policies development plan document when adopted (anticipated in late 2015).
4. The Site Allocations and Policies (incorporating IP-One Area Action Plan) development plan document (DPD) (hereinafter referred to as the Site Allocations Plan) is a new plan. It will replace the remaining saved policies of the adopted Ipswich Local Plan (November 1997) when adopted (anticipated in late 2015).
5. The Council is undertaking a public consultation on the Core Strategy review, the Site Allocations Plan and their supporting sustainability appraisal and appropriate assessment reports. The consultation period will run from Friday 12th December 2014 to Thursday 5th March 2015 and further details can be found on the Council's website, www.ipswich.gov.uk/consultations, at the Council's offices at Grafton House and the Customer Services Centre at the Town Hall, or in Ipswich libraries.

National Planning Policy Framework

6. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was introduced in March 2012 following the introduction of the Localism Act in November 2011. The NPPF is national planning guidance and Local Plan documents such as the Core Strategy must refer to the principles established in the document.
7. The NPPF notes in paragraph 182 that the Local Plan will be assessed at the Examination in Public whether it has been prepared in accordance with the Duty to Co-operate, legal and procedural requirements, and whether it is sound.
8. The Duty to Co-operate was introduced through Section 110 of the Localism Act 2011 in November 2011. It is a legal duty on local planning authorities to co-operate constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis with neighbouring authorities, county councils and other prescribed bodies in planning for strategic, cross boundary matters. The duty to co-operate came into force on 15th November 2011 and any plan submitted for examination on or after this date will be examined for compliance. Local planning authorities are expected to provide evidence of how they have complied with any requirements arising from the duty. Non-compliance with the duty to co-operate cannot be rectified after the submission of a plan.
9. The Inspector will first check that the plans meets the legal requirements under s20(5)(a) of the Act before moving on to test for soundness. Legal requirements include

e.g. whether it is included in the Council's Local Development Scheme; whether the Council's Statement of Community Involvement has been followed; and whether documents have been published and made available for public inspection.

10. To be sound the plan must be:

- **'Positively prepared** – the plan should be prepared based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is reasonable to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development;
- **Justified** – the plan should be the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence;
- **Effective** – the plan should be deliverable over its period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities; and
- **Consistent with national policy** – the plan should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the Framework.' (Para 182, p. 43)

11. Paragraph 15 of the NPPF notes 'a presumption in favour of sustainable development so that it is clear that development which is sustainable can be approved without delay' and plans include 'clear policies that will guide how the presumption should be applied locally' (p. 4).

National Policy Context

12. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, and a key factor in achieving this is the identification and coordination of new infrastructure. It also outlines the importance of ensuring that there is a reasonable prospect that planned infrastructure is deliverable and that local planning authorities work collaboratively with private sector bodies, utility and infrastructure providers in identifying needs for the local area.

13. The Council has reviewed its planning policy on infrastructure provision in light of forthcoming changes to the way in which developer contributions can be secured and emerging evidence relating to housing and jobs forecasts. This paper sets out the Council's reasoning for its proposed changes to policy CS17 and its approach in identifying the infrastructure needs of the Borough up to 2031.

Background – Core Strategy Infrastructure Requirements

14. The Council adopted its Core Strategy and Policies development plan document in December 2011. Policy CS17 (Delivering Infrastructure) outlines the importance of infrastructure to support housing and jobs growth, and comments on the limitations of planning obligations secured by Section 106 Agreements in delivering the more strategic infrastructure needs of the town. The stated intention therefore was for the Council to adopt the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to meet off-site infrastructure requirements, which would replace some individually-negotiated financial contributions for new infrastructure with a set charge based on new floor space that can be pooled with similar contributions to fund planned infrastructure.

15. This policy outlines the key strategic infrastructure requirements needed to deliver the objectives of the Core Strategy, which include:
- Ipswich flood defences;
 - sustainable transport measures e.g. additional park and ride, the Ipswich Major Scheme and accessibility improvements between the Central Shopping Area, Waterfront and railway station;
 - measures to increase east-west capacity in the transport system to ease congestion;
 - strategic education provision of new schools;
 - strategic green infrastructure including a country park;
 - sports and leisure facilities serving the whole Borough;
 - community facilities including GP surgeries and health centres;
 - water management infrastructure;
 - new primary electricity substation in Turret Lane; and
 - town centre environmental enhancements.
16. Further to the above, it states that specific requirements linked to the Northern Fringe (Ipswich Garden Suburb) will be identified in the supplementary planning document that will be prepared for the site.

Revisions to draft policy CS17 in the Core Strategy review

17. There are three main changes to the policy in the proposed submission Core Strategy review. Firstly, it is no longer the Council's aim to adopt a standard charge approach in securing planning obligations by reason that development-specific contributions are considered to be more appropriate in terms of mitigating impact and ensuring that development is both sustainable and viable, in view of the guidance provided in the NPPF.
18. Secondly, for seven weeks in December 2013 and January 2014, the Council consulted on proposed rates for setting the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in a Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule. The Council is currently assessing whether to progress with the next stage of consultation (Draft Charging Schedule) at the present time and so will continue to secure planning obligations for strategic infrastructure through Section 106 Agreements throughout 2015. As a result, the policy has been amended to reflect the existing position whilst highlighting that this may be replaced by the CIL at some point in the future.
19. Finally, the broad categories of infrastructure that would be funded from new developments, as outlined in the policy and Appendix 5 of the Core Strategy review, have been updated in order to link with ongoing infrastructure planning work that would support the Council's proposed CIL rates at Draft Charging Schedule stage.

Alternative options

20. The policy sets out that each development would be expected to meet its site infrastructure needs, and that off-site infrastructure which is more strategic in nature would be secured through either planning obligations (as currently exists) or through the CIL. However, regardless of the mechanism for securing developer contributions, these generally contribute only a small portion of the overall infrastructure spend in the Borough such that alternative funding streams will need to be continually identified and

secured if the level of infrastructure that is deemed necessary to support growth in Ipswich is to be delivered.

Conclusion

21. The Council in its proposed submission Core Strategy review therefore revises policy CS17 by removing the requirement to adopt a standard charge approach for planning obligations, and sets out that development-specific planning obligations and/or the Community Infrastructure Levy will be used to fund infrastructure during the plan period. Table 8a (Major Infrastructure Proposals) of the proposed submission Core Strategy review has also been updated to reflect the current position with project types, funding and target dates for completion, whilst Table 8b outlines the strategic and neighbourhood infrastructure requirements that have been identified for the Ipswich Garden Suburb through the preparation of the supplementary planning document for the site.