

Memorandum of Understanding relating to planning for housing and employment development within the Ipswich Housing Market Area and Ipswich Functional Economic Area

This Memorandum of Understanding has been prepared in order to address the requirements of the Localism Act 2011, section 110, 'Duty to co-operate in relation to planning of sustainable development'.

The Ipswich Housing Market Area and the Ipswich Functional Economic Area comprise the local authority areas of Babergh, Ipswich, Mid-Suffolk and Suffolk Coastal. Ipswich Borough Council's administrative boundary is therefore more tightly drawn than the Ipswich Housing Market Area and Ipswich Functional Economic Area and, therefore, there is a need to work jointly with neighbouring areas to ensure that future needs for development and infrastructure are met. In particular, the objectively assessed need for housing in Ipswich cannot be met within the Borough boundary. The Duty to Co-operate Statement (December 2015) prepared to accompany the Ipswich Borough Council Core Strategy and Policies Development Plan Document Review describes how strategic cross-boundary issues are being jointly addressed. It builds on long-established joint working between the authorities.

The Memorandum of Understanding establishes a framework for co-operation between Babergh District Council, Ipswich Borough Council, Mid Suffolk District Council, Suffolk Coastal District Council and Suffolk County Council in relation to planning for housing across the Housing Market Area and employment growth across the Functional Economic Area.

Parties to the Memorandum of Understanding

The Memorandum of Understanding is between the following parties:

- Babergh District Council
- Ipswich Borough Council
- Mid Suffolk District Council
- Suffolk Coastal District Council and
- Suffolk County Council.

Scope of the Memorandum of Understanding

The Memorandum of Understanding commits the parties to the following actions through a joint or aligned local plan review process and/or other mechanism for joint working including the Suffolk Planning and Infrastructure Framework:

1. To agree objectively assessed housing need for the Ipswich Housing Market Area, which consists of the local authority areas of Ipswich Borough, Suffolk Coastal, Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils;
2. To agree objectively assessed employment need for the Ipswich Functional Economic Area, which also consists of the local authority areas of Ipswich Borough, Suffolk Coastal, Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils;

3. To identify broad locations to accommodate housing and employment growth, within the context of national planning policy and local planning constraints;
4. To ensure the implementation of any mitigation measures required as a result of Habitats Regulations Assessment; and
5. To identify and prioritise Infrastructure delivery related to housing and employment growth across the four local authority areas.

In relation to mechanisms, the Memorandum of Understanding also commits the parties to the following actions:

6. To review and agree the Ipswich Policy Area boundary; and
7. To agree the form of the future joint or aligned plan(s).

Specifically in relation to point 1 above, the Proposed Submission Ipswich Borough Council Core Strategy and Policies Development Plan Document Review November 2014, as updated September 2015, identifies objectively assessed housing need for Ipswich Borough of 13,550 dwellings 2011-2031 (through Policy CS7 The Amount of Housing Required). This figure needs to be considered in the context of the objectively assessed housing need for the Ipswich Housing Market Area, identified in 2013 as 34,250.

Of the total requirement for Ipswich Borough of 13,550 dwellings 2011-2031, land for the delivery of 5,578 dwellings remains to be identified. It is expected that 1,800 of these will be delivered on windfall sites within Ipswich Borough, but an element of need will need to be planned for through joint work with neighbouring local authorities. The residual need identified in the Ipswich Core Strategy Review is 3,778 dwellings.

Objectively assessed need for housing is updated periodically and therefore the figure to be planned for is likely to change in the future. The objectively assessed need for the Housing Market Area will be reviewed to inform the joint work. Identifying locations to accommodate housing and employment development will be informed by sustainability appraisal, Habitats Regulations Assessment and consideration of deliverability and infrastructure requirements.

Timetable for the joint work

Ipswich Borough Council and Suffolk Coastal District Council have set out the following timetable for the production of joint or aligned local plan reviews through their current 'in effect' local development schemes. Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils are scheduled to approve the same timetable through a revised local development scheme.

<i>Notify stakeholders & invite representations</i>	Oct 2016-Jun 2018
<i>Publish draft proposed submission plan for inspection & invite representations</i>	Sept-Oct 2018
<i>Submit plan & submission documents to Secretary of State</i>	Feb 2019
<i>Independent examination hearings</i>	Jun 2019
<i>Receive & publish Inspector's recommendations</i>	Oct 2019
<i>Adopt the plan</i>	Nov-Dec 2019

Mechanism for the Joint Work

The parties already have a forum for joint working through the Ipswich Policy Area (IPA) Board. Its terms of reference are attached at Appendix 1.

The joint work is anticipated to take the form of a joint or aligned plan review and/or a Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Framework. It is yet to be determined whether the plan review will be a single document approved either by a formally-constituted joint body or by each respective council, or aligned local plans for each of the local planning authorities. At a Suffolk Leaders and Portfolio Holders Workshop on 11th March 2016 it was agreed that work will commence on a Suffolk-wide Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Framework. It is anticipated that an Issues and Options document can be produced for consultation in the autumn of 2016 and that the County, District and Borough Councils will be able to adopt it in 2017/18 in order to support future Local Plans in Suffolk. The joint work, or parts of it, referred to in this Memorandum of Understanding may therefore be subsumed into the Suffolk Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Framework.

Under the devolution deal for East Anglia, announced in March 2016, a Combined Authority may take responsibility for the strategic planning and infrastructure framework from May 2017 onwards.

The IPA Board will provide the mechanism for joint working in the short to medium term. The earliest work that the IPA Board will undertake will be to review the IPA boundary and agree the form of the joint plan. In doing so, it will have regard to any strategic planning work which may be looking at different geographies, including Suffolk-wide.

The IPA Board does not have decision-making powers and therefore the parties will agree outcomes through each Council's existing decision-making structures, in accordance with their constitutions.

Roles and responsibilities

In relation to a joint or aligned local plan review, the planning policy services of Ipswich Borough Council, Suffolk Coastal District Council, Mid Suffolk District Council and Babergh District Council will lead the preparation of the work, with support from Suffolk County Council. The resourcing of the Suffolk Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Framework is to be agreed through the Transformation Challenge Award Board. The IPA Board terms of reference already sets out roles and responsibilities in relation to that body.

Limitations

This Memorandum of Understanding does not alter the fact that Babergh District Council, Ipswich Borough Council, Mid Suffolk District Council and Suffolk Coastal District Council remain the local planning authorities for their respective areas. The key objective of this Memorandum of Understanding is to ensure that strategic policies are consistent across the local authorities. In addition, each local authority will have non-strategic, locally-specific policies covering a range of topic areas, which will need to be considered and included in appropriate documents.

SIGNATURES

Signature:

Date 23/5/16

Signed on behalf of Babergh District Council

Signature:

Date 17/5/16

Signed on behalf of Ipswich Borough Council

Signature:

Date 23/3/16

Signed on behalf of ~~Mid~~ Suffolk District Council

Signature:

Date 26/5/16

Signed on behalf of Suffolk Coastal District Council

Signature:

Date 9/6/16

Signed on behalf of Suffolk County Council

Appendix 1 – Terms of reference of the Ipswich Policy Area Board

Ipswich Policy Area Board

Revised Terms of Reference, October 2015

- To provide a forum in which the five local authorities can work together to develop, promote and deliver their vision for the Ipswich Policy Area as a major economic growth area within the Greater Ipswich sub region, County of Suffolk and New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership.
- To enable them to co-operate as local planning authorities on the preparation and monitoring of their Local Plans and share relevant evidence and intelligence.
- To provide a mechanism to ensure that all partners and stakeholders work together to deliver the housing and employment growth requirements for the Ipswich Policy Area and coordinate the delivery of the necessary infrastructure – including transport, education, skills, power, green infrastructure, flood and coastal defences.

Constitution

The Board will consist of one Councillor and one Officer from the following authorities:

Ipswich Borough Council
Suffolk Coastal District Council
Mid Suffolk District Council
Babergh District Council
Suffolk County Council

Each authority will nominate its representatives to the Board.

Ipswich Borough Council will provide the Secretariat to the Board, including Minutes of all meetings and processing all Freedom of Information requests.

The Board will be chaired by Suffolk County Council until March 2017.

The Board will meet every two months but additional meetings may be called if required.

Sub-groups may be established by agreement. Other organisations may be co-opted onto sub-groups or invited to attend meetings.

