




# Housing Asset Management Strategy 2024 - 2030

## PROUD OF IPSWICH INVESTING IN OUR HOMES







**“**  
***Proud of Ipswich,  
Proud of our homes.***  
**”**

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# Foreword

**I am pleased to be able to present to you the Council's Housing Asset Management Strategy for the next six years. Our Asset Management Strategy sets out how we will invest in our homes so we can be proud of them.**

Ipswich Borough Council is the largest Local Authority Registered Provider of social housing in Suffolk with just under 7,900 homes. This brings with it great responsibility and accountability for providing decent, energy efficient and safe housing across all its housing assets, as well as providing services that are well managed and transparent.

With some significant events in Social Housing highlighted recently in national news, such as the Grenfell Tower tragedy, this strategy is set at a time when the Government, through the Building Safety Regulator and the Regulator for Social Housing, is seeking to develop a whole new approach to building safety and regulation of social housing, by making landlords more accountable for providing safe homes, quality services and treating residents with respect.

Whilst the Building Safety Act and the Social Housing (Regulation) Act create ground breaking reforms, giving tenants and leaseholders more rights, powers and protections, they also create real opportunity for the Council to reset our approach, by self-assessing against the emerging themes set out in the new Consumer Standards and Code of Practice, that include Safety & Quality; Tenancy; Transparency, Influence & Accountability and Neighbourhood & Community, and also to set new medium and long term plans and objectives to meet the regulatory scrutiny. This should enable the Council to build on our good work to date to provide even better services and homes for our tenants.

This strategy does not just focus on our existing homes, it also embraces the Governments "Future Homes Standard" where all new homes receiving planning permission after 2025 are zero-carbon ready so they are future proofed with high levels of insulation and do not rely on fossil fuel heating.

This Asset Strategy is pivotal to us having the right approaches and actions in place to make sure the homes we provide are safe, well maintained, of good quality, and meet the needs of current and future residents. It will also help deliver the Council's new Corporate Strategy for a thriving Ipswich.

**Councillor Alasdair Ross**  
Housing Portfolio Holder



# Our Corporate Strategy and commitment to asset management

The Ipswich Borough Council Corporate Strategy: 'Proud of Ipswich' sets out through its five priorities, how the Council will work to champion our communities and revitalise our town.

We want to be proud of the homes and services we offer as a social housing provider and have a commitment to achieve best practice through continuous improvement. That's why we are committed to investing significantly in our homes through effective asset management.

## What is asset management?

'Asset Management' is the term used to describe the range of activities we need to repair, maintain, and improve all our homes to reflect changing policy and practice, modern standards, and the evolving needs of residents.

Asset management includes repairs and maintenance and lots more too, such as updating, improving, and investing in properties so they provide homes we can be proud of.

Our strategy therefore includes a wide range of work and activities including maintaining safe and healthy homes, tackling climate change by reducing carbon emissions, modernising our sheltered housing, and placing a focus on the needs of our residents. Finally, our strategy considers our ambitious plans to continue to build new affordable homes for the Community of Ipswich.

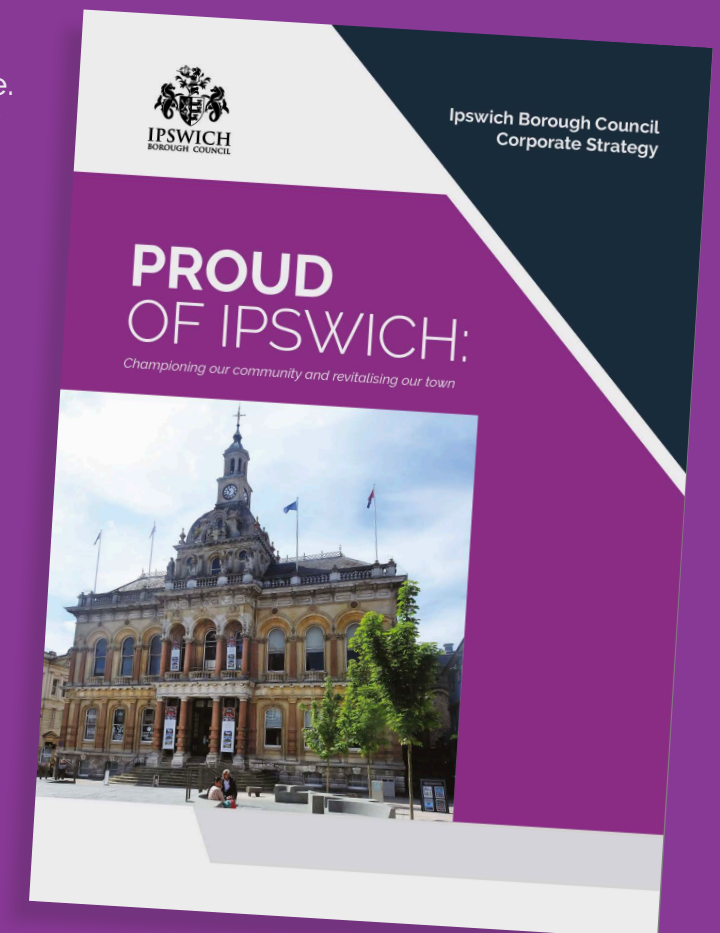
## Corporate Strategy Priorities

- ✓ A thriving town centre.
- ✓ Meeting the housing needs of our community.
- ✓ A carbon neutral council.
- ✓ Promoting community wellbeing and fairness.
- ✓ A financially sustainable council providing good quality services.

Four of these themes feature, to a greater or lesser extent in the Housing Asset Management Strategy.

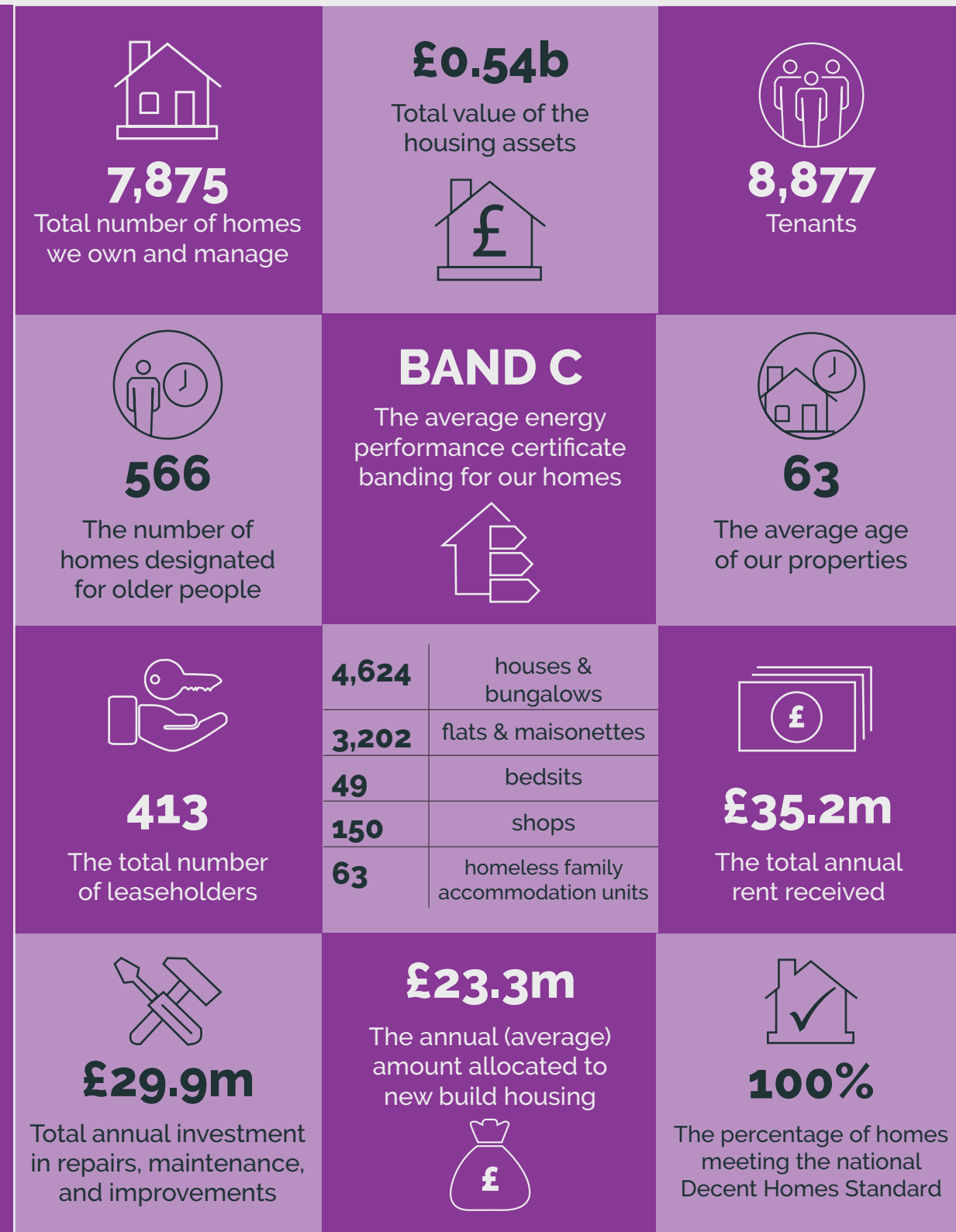
## Corporate Strategy Mission

- To work with our community to shape the future and achieve a better quality of life for everyone.
- To put customers at the heart of everything we do
- To lead, enable and collaborate with partners to achieve better outcomes for Ipswich.
- To use data and insight to drive better outcomes.
- To have a diverse, skilled, empowered, and customer centred workforce.
- To provide accessible digital services.
- To take transparent decisions which make a real difference to our community.



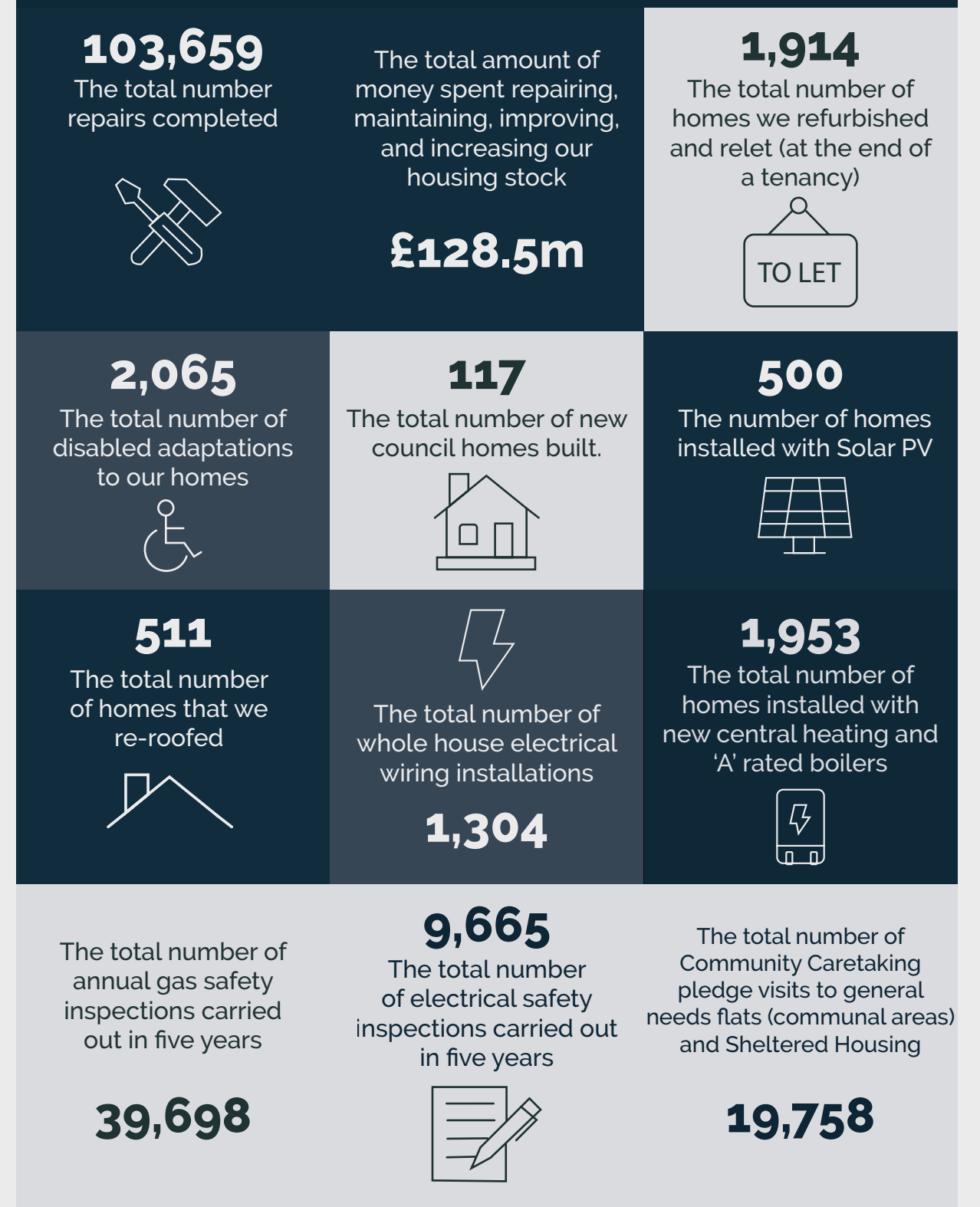
# Key Facts

## about Housing



# Achievements

Key achievements during the life of our last Asset Management Strategy 2018 – 2023 (as the Council maintains its data in financial years, this is the period 2018/19 to 2022/23, a **5-year period**) is included below:





# The challenges we face

## 01 Building and home safety

- Meeting the wide range of new and pre-existing legislation to make sure our residents are safe in their homes.
- Ensuring our homes meet the latest standards for Fire Safety, Building Safety, and compliance with key areas such as Gas, Electric, Legionella, and Asbestos.

## 02 Repairs and maintenance

- Carrying out repairs and maintenance as effectively, efficiently, and quickly as possible so we meet our obligations to keep homes in good repair at a cost that is affordable.

## 03 Home quality standards

- Ensuring all our homes meet regulatory minimum standards, including reference to the requirements of the new Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023.

## 04 Intelligent use of data

- Gathering and optimising the use of a range of information and data so we maintain a 'golden thread' and can make properly informed decisions about how, when and where we spend money investing in our homes. This includes having up to date stock condition data.

## 05 Decarbonisation

- Fully understanding the range and cost of carrying out works to bring all our homes up to Energy Performance Band (EPC) C by 2030.
- Upscaling our plans and works programmes for retrofitting our homes so they have much higher levels of thermal insulation and use renewable energy.

## 06 Sheltered Housing

- Modernising our older persons housing schemes and services so they better meet the current and future needs and aspirations of residents.

## 07 Dynamic portfolio management

- Continuing to build high quality, modern and affordable housing, as well as exploring modern methods of construction.
- Ensuring a proactive approach to the acquisition and disposal of properties within our portfolio.
- Regenerating properties or estates to unlock the potential of our assets, including and coupled with the development of new Council homes.

## 08 Use of modern technology

- Embracing the use of new technology and digital approaches when delivering our decarbonisation programme, when specifying components for repairs and replacements and in how we deliver our services to residents.

## 09 Customer Experience

- Meeting the needs and expectations of our residents for excellent standards of service delivery when we carry out repairs and investment work.
- Improving the way in which we involve and engage with residents so their views can help shape and inform our wide range of services.

## 10 Resourcing our work

- Ensuring we have sufficient people with the right skills to deliver our repairs, maintenance, and investment works.
- Having in place or accessing sufficient financial resources to fund all our activities.

# Our asset management strategy priorities

Our Asset Management Strategy is built around 10 priorities. These have been designed to directly address the challenges we face and the changing face of consumer regulation. Together, they explain how we will go about ***investing in our homes***.

By delivering these priorities it will ensure we meet emerging legislation around safe homes, take a solid approach to asset management over the next six years, as well as providing a strong foundation for the years beyond. In this way, we can sustain a portfolio of homes that are 'safe, fit for purpose and fit for the future'.

By delivering our 10 priorities we will strengthen the role and purpose of the Council in providing much needed, good quality affordable housing in the borough.



## Our **10** asset management priorities

- 01** Ensuring our homes are safe and secure.
- 02** Delivering effective and efficient repairs and maintenance.
- 03** Improving the quality and decency of our homes and neighbourhoods.
- 04** Ensuring intelligent, data-led asset management.
- 05** Decarbonising our homes.
- 06** Modernising our sheltered housing accommodation.
- 07** Regenerating, developing, and evolving our portfolio of homes.
- 08** Embracing technology and digital approaches.
- 09** Delivering an excellent customer experience.
- 10** Having the right resources in place to deliver our work.

## 14 Priority: Ensuring our homes are safe and secure

### Our Vision

We will continue to take a rigorous approach to meeting all building safety, legal and regulatory compliance requirements so the homes we provide are safe, secure, and free from hazards and disrepair. It is crucial we have effective systems and approaches in place for continuously monitoring and providing assurance on these compliance activities. We will maintain all required safety checks, testing and servicing as required.

### Safe homes that are free from damp and disrepair

Living in one of our homes must mean our residents can be sure their home is safe.

#### We will:

- Ensure our homes are free from damp, mould, disrepair and other housing health and safety risks (as measured by the safety rating system - HHSRS), acting pre-emptively and proactively to help prevent problems occurring, tackling any issues arising and meeting the requirements and expectations of the Regulator for Social Housing and guidance issued by the Housing Ombudsman.
- To survey homes regularly to check the condition and seeking out problems using risk-based approaches.
- Ensure a positive 'safety culture' across the Council with all staff and contractors as our 'eyes and ears' to help identify and address issues relating to the condition or safety of homes.

### Compliance activities

Our compliance activities cover the range of statutory or good practice servicing, testing and checks we carry out to ensure they remain safe and serviceable. We will have robust, reliable, and accountable processes, systems and works programmes in place to ensure we meet all our statutory and best practice obligations.

This includes the 'big 6' of:

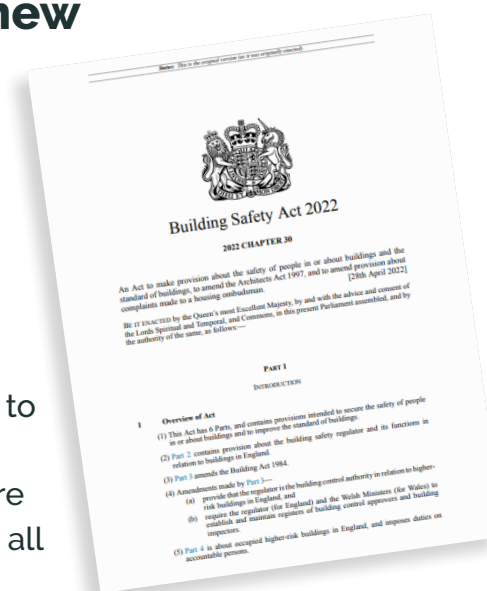
- Gas servicing and safety checks (10-month recurring programme)
- Electrical installation testing and remedial works (5 yearly)
- Fire safety management, including fire detection system checks/servicing, firefighting equipment checks/servicing, fire door checks/upgrades and fire risk assessments (FRAs)
- Asbestos management
- Water hygiene checks/maintenance
- Lift servicing/maintenance
- Our Compliance Dashboard records our performance in meeting our headline targets. It is updated monthly, reviewed periodically by Councillors, and used to help ensure we maintain a fully compliant position.

## The Building Safety Act 2022 and new Fire Safety Regulations

The Building Safety Act 2022 brings a range of additional requirements for our 'higher risk' buildings, including fire safety. Our one designated high rise sheltered block now has specific requirements by law and our other sheltered housing schemes, homeless family units and general needs blocks of flats, will require improvement to meet new legislation relating to fire safety.

We have put in place a new approach for managing fire safety in these buildings designed to ensure we meet all new and pre-existing requirements. This includes:

- Registering Cumberland Towers with the Building Safety Regulator and putting in place a Building Safety Case.
- Having site specific fire strategies complimented by regular Fire Risk Assessments and carrying out any remedial works arising from those assessments in a timely manner.
- Providing training to support managing fire safety.
- Enhancing the role of front-line staff in carrying out regular inspections.



### To ensure our homes are safe and secure, we will:

- Have clear policies and procedures in place to manage HHSRS risks including disrepair, damp, mould, and condensation effectively in accordance with the requirements and expectations of the Regulator, including regularly surveying homes and seeking out problems using data and risk-based approaches.
- Employ within the establishment a Health and Safety lead, responsible for fire safety, health and safety and compliance obligations towards tenants.
- Have robust, reliable, and accountable processes, systems and works programmes in place to ensure we meet all our statutory and best practice obligations for our compliance works, including monthly updated performance dashboard.
- Fully meet our requirements under the Building Safety Act and Fire Regulations, including completing all identified fire safety improvement works in a timely manner.



## Delivering effective and efficient repairs and planned maintenance

### Our Vision

**We will continue to provide a good quality, reliable repairs, and maintenance service, monitor our performance and quickly make improvements when these are required. We will review and strive to improve how we go about carrying out works to empty homes so we can relet them as quickly as possible. We will ensure we have well planned, expertly delivered arrangements for all our repairs and maintenance works that use our limited resources wisely and to best effect.**

### Responsive Maintenance

Responsive maintenance covers the day-to-day repair requests received from residents, as well as other repairs such as those identified through, inspections, housing, and neighbourhood management activities. As part of this service, the Council remains committed to providing 24-7 all year-round response for emergency repairs.

Our aim is to provide a high quality, reliable service that meets our resident's needs and expectations, with services achieving upper quartile benchmark performance. To help manage demand we have identified some specific areas on which we will focus. These are:

- To improve the process and experience of reporting a repair by reducing call waiting times.
- We have increased the ways in which repairs can be reported by the recent introduction of online repairs reporting.
- To actively promote our online repairs reporting facility.
- Continue to invest heavily in improving our homes by replacing

components on a regular basis to reduce the number of repairs.

- To increase the number of repairs completed on time (based on the allocated priority) and fixed first time.

### Preparing homes for reletting (voids)

When a tenancy ends, we use our Void Standard to assess any improvements that may be required before a home is relet. To support residents to create a successful and sustainable tenancy the Void Standard sets minimum standards of acceptable fixtures, fittings, decoration, and flooring.

Our focus over the next five years will be to manage the voids process as efficiently as possible to ensure homes are available for new tenants on Gateway to Home choice as soon as possible helping to meet the housing needs of the community. Through tenancy management, we will seek that when a tenancy ends, the outgoing tenant leaves the property in an appropriate condition.

### Planned Maintenance

We will put in place an ongoing significant programme of planned maintenance for replacing the main building components of homes at the end of their serviceable life. Proper maintenance and preventative work on an ongoing basis should maximise the lifespan of components, so we replace them only when needed to maintain the quality of homes and to minimise responsive repair costs.

Our approach to planned maintenance will be informed by the data in our Asset Management Database (Keystone) captured from regular stock condition surveys, the Government Decent Homes Standard and guided by our wider activities, business intelligence and objectives, insight from our responsive repairs work and agile to changes in legal and regulatory requirements.

### Adaptations

The Council remains committed to an adaptations programme to adapt home so tenants can remain living independently as long as possible. The programme is now a needs-based approach meaning those with greatest need will be prioritised. The council will also make use of its new build programme, so we build from new some properties that are already adapted.



### To improve the effectiveness and efficiency of our repairs and planned maintenance we will:

- Seek to achieve upper quartile performance for our responsive repairs service.
- Aim to relet our homes as quickly as possible when a tenancy ends.
- Maintain up to date information in our asset management database and use it to actively to inform our planned maintenance budgeting and significant annual programmes.
- Maintain an adaptations programme based on a needs approach where those with the greatest needs are prioritised.

## Improving the quality and decency of our homes and neighbourhoods

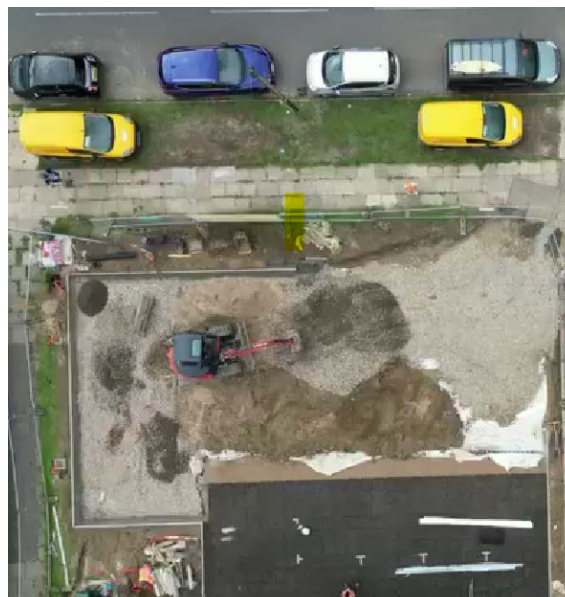
### Our Vision

**To improve the quality and decency of our homes and external areas we manage and maintain to ensure our properties and neighbourhoods continue to meet the needs and expectations of residents now, and ensure they are 'fit for the future'.**

### Improving the quality of our homes

As a minimum, we will ensure all our homes meet the government's Decent Homes Standard (DHS). This includes achieving a range of requirements on housing fitness, health & safety, quality of facilities and thermal insulation. To do this we will regularly inspect our properties to assess DHS compliance and carry out repairs and planned improvements when needed. We expect further Government and Regulatory led requirements to emerge during the life of this strategy. This includes an updated Decent Homes Standard with more stringent requirements.

We also need to review our own Ipswich Standard considering any statutory or regulatory changes, looking at a range of factors that make for a 'modern home' and that matter most to residents, such as the suitability and comfort of homes, or measures to reduce the real-life cost of living in one of our properties. An example of this would be measures undertaken to help reduce fuel poverty and/or tackle the cost-of-living crisis.



## Improving the quality of our neighbourhoods

Successful asset management takes a broader view of a home – looking beyond the four walls. We need to recognise the importance of the quality of the neighbourhoods and environments in which our homes are located. This includes the common areas of our blocks of flats, pathways and parking areas, landscaping in common areas of estates and trees and larger green spaces. By keeping all these areas clear of rubbish, well maintained, and effectively managed it will help support more successful neighbourhoods and communities that are cleaner and safer, attractive and a place where residents take more personal responsibility for where they live. This will help enhance the lives of our residents and support good physical and mental wellbeing. The Council is therefore committed to retaining 'Neighbourhood and Improvement' budgets and operating a Housing Community Caretaking Service.

To help raise the quality of our neighbourhoods we will develop a new Ipswich Neighbourhood Management Plan that will drive our work to improve the overall environment including better maintenance of the street scene, and better management of grassed areas and open space as part of a Proud of Ipswich approach.

### To improve the quality of our homes and neighbourhoods we will:

- Have a proactive approach to our property survey work, acting on the findings so we can fully meet the prevailing Decent Homes Standard.
- Review our own Ipswich Standard, evaluating how best to use this to ensure we provide 'modern' homes that best meet the needs and expectations of current and future residents.
- Put in place an Ipswich Neighbourhood Management Plan that will drive our work to improve the management and maintenance of the overall environment including better maintenance of the street scene, and better management of grassed areas and open space as part of a Proud of Ipswich approach.
- Explore the opportunities to introduce a chargeable 'Handy Person' service to meet tenants and resident's needs.



**Our Vision**

**We will collect, store, and use quality, accurate and well-maintained information and data on the condition and maintenance of our housing assets. This is so we can maintain a 'golden thread' of information to demonstrate a good understanding of the safety and condition of our homes and our performance in properly managing and maintaining them. We will use this information and data to develop insight and intelligence to inform decisions on our repair, maintenance, and investment.**

**Stock Condition Surveys and Business Intelligence**

We will use stock condition surveys to help us understand the current condition of our homes and use the results to forecast the future investment needed over the next 30 years, with a focus on the next five years. We will carry out 20% internal and external surveys every year, meaning we survey all properties every five years.

Collecting and using a range of business intelligence on our assets, key housing management data and insight into neighbourhood issues means we can join together the 'golden thread' of information to understand the ongoing condition, repair, and management needs of our homes. The intelligence will cover information on our ASSETS, on our HOUSING MANAGEMENT work, on the NEIGHBOURHOODS, and on our PERFORMANCE in providing good quality homes and services.

**Making Effective Use of our Survey Data and Business Intelligence**

Turning good quality and reliable survey data and business intelligence into insight for informing decision making is vital to good asset management, business planning and reporting so we can:

- Demonstrate up to date knowledge and compliance with our legal and regulatory obligations.
- See and understand what works have been carried out on all our properties, when it was undertaken, and what still needs to be done.
- Forecast when building elements need to be replaced using a combination of industry recognised lifecycles, adjusted based on day-to-day repairs experience and professional judgement using up to date stock condition assessments.
- Make sound, informed decisions on what works need to be done when investing in our homes.
- Spending your money wisely and making best use of our resources.

**Understanding Property Performance and Option Appraisal**

The Regulator of Social Housing's Value for Money Standard sets out an expectation that housing providers demonstrate a full understanding of the return they generate from their homes compared to the costs of maintaining those homes.

We will therefore use our stock condition survey and business intelligence work to help us continually improve our understanding of each home throughout its life. We will use this information, data, and insight to assess the viability and overall cost of our homes, identifying and understanding those that are:

- Suitable and sustainable for the longer term.
- Of concern, due to one or more aspects causing significant issues.

We will use option appraisal techniques to carry out assessments and consultation on the future of properties that are of concern.

**To ensure we take an intelligence led approach to asset management we will:**

- Carry out stock condition surveys, so every property is inspected every five years.
- Collect and use a range of other business intelligence to ensure a 'golden thread' of up-to-date information on condition, repair, and management needs of our homes.
- Identify and understand the relative performance of our assets to determine and distinguish between those that are long-term sustainable and those that are 'of concern'.
- Carry out option appraisals as appropriate properties or schemes that are 'of concern', acting on the outcome of the assessment.



## 22 **Priority:** **Decarbonising our homes**

### **Our Vision**

**One of the biggest national challenges we face is to significantly improve the levels of thermal insulation and ventilation in our homes and installing heating systems that use renewable energies, to meet the stretching targets set by government for carbon emissions and energy usage. Extensive programmes of work will be needed on our properties to meet the target of having all our homes meet Energy Performance Band C by 2030 and being 'net zero carbon' by 2050.**

The Council is already proactive in decarbonising our homes, so they produce fewer carbon dioxide emissions and use less energy. Many of the Council's homes currently are insulated and benefit from efficient A rated central heating. However, the Government has now legislated to create a further step change in energy efficiency requirements. The measures will improve the health and wellbeing of our residents, meaning their homes are warmer, with less expensive energy bills. The main way to decarbonise homes is by carrying out whole house 'retrofit' works to add or improve existing levels of insulation, provide adequate ventilation (often mechanically), and install renewable energy heating systems.

In addition to decarbonising our homes, we need to reduce the carbon footprint of our organisation's operational activities, by meeting the objectives in the Council's Climate Reduction Strategy.

In relation to our housing, we have currently earmarked £171 million to fund a major programme of works. To help us



gear up to carry out these works we are improving our knowledge by capturing an EPC for 100% of our homes and using that intelligence to plan a retrofit programme of works and identify what additional grant funding will be needed.

### **Our current initiatives**

We have plans to carry out some further initiatives:

- Carrying out a pilot retrofit project to trial works across around 50 properties. We will seek to part fund some of this work through the Government's Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund programme (subject to a bid being accepted).
- Fully populating our dataset of EPCs by carrying out additional energy performance assessments of the homes on which we currently have no information.

### **Developing a Carbon Reduction Strategy**

To help drive and coordinate our decarbonisation work, based on what we learn from an initial pilot of 50 homes, we will develop and put in place

a Carbon Reduction Strategy. This will set out our approach for the remainder of our stock.

The Strategy we will develop a roadmap for how we will work to meet the national target for social housing to meet net carbon zero by 2050.

The Decarbonisation Strategy will be built around four key initiatives.

#### **i. Quantifying the works needed**

We will work with Retrofit Assessors, Designers and Co-ordinators to develop a detailed understanding of the energy performance of our homes and the retrofit options available for each type of property. We will use this information to assess the viability and put in place a plan to achieve the Government's target for all properties meeting an EPC Band C by 2030, delivered on a 'worst first' basis.

#### **ii. Retrofitting homes**

Targeting homes with the lowest energy performance ratings, we will undertake "whole house" retrofit solutions of fabric first measures based on the most efficient, cost-effective, simple solutions.

#### **iii. Pilot scheme, skills, and capacity**

Reducing the carbon footprint of our homes involves a range of new activities that require new skills or experience. We will therefore engage specialist retrofit decarbonisation resources with the relevant skills, which is a qualifying condition to any grant funding. We will also use the knowledge and experience gained through our initial pilot scheme, so initiatives can then be rolled out based on lessons learned.

#### **iv. Funding and learning**

We have already earmarked funding to decarbonise the housing portfolio by 2050 and improve all homes up to EPC C by 2030. This £171 million represents a considerable investment and will need commitment if we are to roll out works programmes on this scale. However, we will also need to lever in external funding opportunities for decarbonisation works. To ensure we are well placed to access funding it is important we get ourselves positioned and ready to make applications.

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### **To progress the decarbonisation of our homes we will:**

- Capture EPC ratings for all our homes so that a programme of retrofit works focusses on the "worst first" approach.
- Carry out our pilot project of 50 properties using Government's Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund funding (if available)
- Develop a Carbon Reduction Strategy based on lessons learned through the pilot programme to set our approach to Decarbonisation by 2050
- To identify and target funding opportunities such as the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, when and where appropriate



**Modernising our sheltered housing accommodation****Our Vision**

**We will deliver a significant programme of investment across our sheltered housing schemes to improve their quality and attractiveness along with a service that provides good quality, modern accommodation which supports independent living and offers a positive lifestyle choice. With services that are flexible, adaptable, and tailored to meet the need of older people, wherever they choose to live.**

**Our Older Person's Housing Strategy**

We will develop an Older Person's Housing Strategy that sets out our vision for our sheltered housing schemes.

Our aim is to bring the buildings and accommodation up to a set of modern standards that better meet the needs and aspirations of current and future residents. At the same, we want to reinvent how we go about managing the schemes and the services we provide to those living in and around them.

In 2024 we will bring forward a dedicated strategy for Older People and their accommodation with the objectives to:

- Create a strong brand that residents of Ipswich want and desire.
- Improve their appeal, making them much more attractive to the Council's target audience of potential residents and promoting them more effectively as a positive accommodation choice.
- To only provide Older Person

Housing, in locations, which offer facilities and services that meet a person's needs as they age well.

- To provide Older Person Housing which is affordable and provides value for money to both residents and the landlord.
- Make the accommodation look and feel more modern, with fresh, bright, and up to date communal areas, along with fixtures and fittings that are attractive and of good quality.
- Reconfigure internal communal area and individual accommodation space, where a marked or significant benefit can be gained.
- Refurbish or replace old, dated, unattractive or poor-quality aspects within the schemes such as doors, partitions, décor, lighting etc. with fixtures and fittings that are modern and meet the latest safety standards.
- Improve the accessibility of communal areas and flats to help and provide facilities for people who are less mobile.
- Ensure the grounds and gardens are attractive, well maintained and can be actively used.

- Consider the long term decommission or re-purpose schemes which cannot meet our long-term aspirations and consider how to make better or more appropriate use of the property or assets.

We envisage that this will be a long-term capital investment which may take the life of this strategy to complete. It is estimated that the cost of this programme will be around £15 million, and this has already been set aside in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy for the Housing Revenue Account.

We will identify the improvements and modernisation through a series of condition surveys which will consider a range of variables including Location; Property Condition; Entrance and Communal areas; Flat sizes and layouts.

**To modernise our sheltered housing schemes, we will:**

- Implement the recommendations and actions from our Older Persons Housing Strategy, finalising the scope and cost of works to develop long term sustainable schemes and progress alternative options for those deemed as no longer 'fit for purpose'.



## Regenerating, developing, and evolving our portfolio of homes

### Our Vision

**We need to optimise the use of our existing housing assets, finding and delivering solutions to homes that are no longer fit for purpose. As part of our overall ambition to increase the quality, suitability, use and value of our housing assets we will consider their viability and assess other options beyond just continuing to invest and upgrade the existing properties. We also need to have an established pipeline for building new homes that meets the needs of residents, with homes that are fit for the future.**

Continued ongoing investment in our properties is likely to be the most appropriate course of action in many cases. But we must make sure we also explore the long-term viability of our homes when improving, upgrading, or remodelling properties or schemes. We also need to continue to identify underutilised assets that could unlock development opportunities, such as garages, parking areas, drying areas, and poor-quality amenity land for the development of additional homes.

Some properties present challenges given a combination of factors including their age, the type of accommodation they provide, the construction or design, levels of demand or their immediate and future expenditure requirements. In some cases, long-term investment may be uneconomic, represent poor value for money and be outweighed by the benefits of other options. These other options may include demolition and redevelopment, or sale of properties with the proceeds being recycled into our new build or existing property investment programme.

We will link our asset management work with our new development activities. Whilst these usually involve the construction of new properties, we will also pursue opportunities for adding additional homes to our portfolio through the acquisition of pre-existing properties, including potentially buying back homes previously sold under the right to buy. These homes will be refurbished to our 'Voids Standard' before being let.

Developing new homes counteracts the impact of right to buy, maintaining and ideally increasing the number of council owned homes. Any new homes that we build will meet the new "Future Homes and Buildings Standard" so they are future proofed with low carbon heating and high levels of energy efficiency. The future homes standard 2025 seeks to ensure new homes that are built will produce 75-80% less carbon emissions than homes built under the current Building Regulations.



We will take decisions in the context of our housing strategies and analysis of local demand, using an option appraisal process. This process will be informed by all relevant information and data, explore the range of potential alternative options using a recognised sector leading approach, then arrive at a preferred option for implementation that stands up to scrutiny. We will ensure opportunities are provided to residents to give their views, be involved in the process, and help shape the future of their neighbourhood.

### To develop our portfolio of homes we will:

- Actively consider whether we should be improving, upgrading, or remodelling properties as part of planned maintenance programmes to make sure they better meet modern standards and expectations.
- Continue to seek out potential opportunities for creating new, additional homes within our existing schemes or estates, passing suggestions to the development team.
- Roll out our approach to option appraisal when making significant decisions on our housing stock.
- Support the development team as needed in informing the development programme and standards, including in the acquisition's initiative.
- Build new homes so they meet the new "Future Homes and Buildings Standard" from 2025





## 28 Priority: Embracing technology and digital approaches

### Our Vision

**We will continuously explore and use the latest products and technologies, so our existing housing stock is kept in good repair, up to date and truly fit for purpose for modern living, and our new homes are built for the future. We will therefore invest our time and money exploring how modern materials and new technologies can bring financial benefits to our tenants.**

Whilst we will continue to have a focus on delivering more energy efficient homes, we want to go well beyond this to secure:

- Homes that use less energy, are healthier and less prone to damp and mould, safer and are cheaper for our tenants to live in and run than they would otherwise be. Homes in poor disrepair can directly impact a tenant's health.
- Facilitating high-speed broadband services to our homes wherever possible
- Upgraded digital alarm systems, so that over time, and as technology evolves, giving residents the opportunity to use more interactive programmes and tools to assist them to live more independently and reduce the level of staff input.

Example of Solar power distribution



### Our Smart home ambitions – Building on what we already do

The Council is already investing in the latest technologies to drive up energy efficiency, tackle damp and mould and improve efficiencies in repairs and maintenance. Some of these include:

- Low energy lighting in common areas.
- Smart boilers that allow diagnosis of faults to efficiently manage repairs.
- Installing Solar PV where possible, with residents in 500 properties in our stock already benefiting from some free electricity.
- External and internal wall insulation to create much warmer homes.
- Installing PIV ventilation systems in homes affected by damp and mould.
- Replacement of old heating systems that are expensive to maintain and run with the latest models and highest levels of energy efficiency, including A rated boilers.
- All new homes that are in the pipeline are to be installed with the latest low carbon heat pump technology.

We need to make sure we are ready for any further innovations that may arise over the next ten years.

### To ensure we embrace technology and digital approaches in our work we will:

- Continually search for and be open minded on the use and benefits of technology that are easy to understand and make a real benefit to our residents.
- Trial the use of smart sensors that provide real time data on the performance of every home based on how tenants live.

## 30 **Priority:** **Delivering an excellent customer experience**

### **Our Vision**

**We are determined to deliver high levels of satisfaction by constantly seeking to improve the customer experience. We will do this by ensuring a strong customer focus on how we go about repairing and maintaining our homes. We will actively work with residents, engaging with them and involving them in the design and delivery of our repair services and planned programmes of work. We will be open and respectful, listening to the 'voice' of our customers and acting on what we hear.**

### **Improving the experience of our customers**

We are committed to embracing the requirement to seek tenants views on our services as part of the new consumer standards.

We already conduct a quarterly survey of the views of a representative number of around 150 residents, using a range of Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) published by the Regulator for Social Housing.

The results of the most recent surveys show a general improvement on the proportion of satisfied customers on repair and maintenance issues, compared with STAR surveys in 2020. 81% of residents report they are satisfied with the repairs service, and 74% are satisfied with the time taken to complete the last repair.

We want to improve the way we communicate our plans and timescales for carrying out our planned maintenance works, both inside and

outside homes. We will explain the reasons for our decisions about which works will be carried out, and when, with staff being confident and consistent about this.

### **Ensuring a resident focus in our work**

We also want customers to help shape and inform how we go about delivering our repairs and maintenance services, the standard of our homes, and our investment plans. Customers are well placed to make a valuable contribution in helping decide which works are carried out in their home, especially longer-term improvements. We will therefore seek and act on the views and opinions of customers through resident surveys and by actively engaging through our groups of involved residents.

In delivering our work in this area we will:

- Develop our understanding of residents' needs & aspirations on aspects such as modern standards of quality, affordability, and environmental sustainability as part of a review of the Ipswich Standard.

- Understand the features and attributes of homes that make the biggest difference or impact on people's lives and feed these into investment planning activities.
- Understand how customers want to be involved in measuring and monitoring our performance in doing what we say we will do.
- Hold regular meetings with tenants, have tenant reps and be proactive in our tenant participation.

We will align our work with one of the key recommendations of the Better Social Housing Review (BSHR, December 2022). This sets out how social landlords should partner with tenants, contractors, and frontline staff to develop and apply new standards defining what an excellent maintenance and repairs process looks like. Finally, it is important that we work in partnership with our leaseholders to give them an opportunity to help shape the services we deliver to them.

### **To ensure a resident focus in our work and improve the experience for our customers we will:**

- Review the Ipswich Standard in partnership with involved tenants to ensure it reflects their latest views on modern standards of quality that are affordable and sustainable.
- Respond to the BSHR by proactively working with involved tenants and leaseholders in the review of the repairs process, with the aim of co-designing what a good repairs service needs to look like, and how they want to measure and monitor our performance.
- Aim to achieve consistent levels of satisfaction across the TSM questions relating to repairs and maintenance of at least 85%.
- Establish and maintain a dialogue with residents about the works we plan to carry out in their home and when we plan to do these, inviting views and feedback.





## Having the right resources and governance in place to deliver our work and account for our performance

### Our Vision

**We will put in place the right resources and arrangements to deliver our repairs and planned maintenance work and use them to best effect. It is crucial we have skilled and knowledgeable staff, external contractors, and suppliers, along with the financial capacity to deliver a well procured and managed range of repair and investment works. We will also ensure we have good governance in place to measure and monitor our performance, comparing ourselves with others through benchmarking, all with the aim of ensuring continuous improvement and value for money.**

### Staffing and Culture

We recognise the importance, value, and potential of our staffing resources as we provide not just homes but also much needed services to residents. We will therefore:

- Offer an attractive place to work and develop the right organisational culture, clearly aligned to the Council's values.
- Invest in recruiting and retaining skilled and talented officers who possess the blend of expertise needed to deliver a modern, forward-facing repairs and asset management service.
- Support managers to fulfil their roles and provide them with the right tools to ensure staff feel valued and empowered to deliver the best possible outcomes for residents.
- Regularly review our structure and the knowledge and skills we need so we can put in place plans to ensure the services we provide are 'fit for purpose'.
- Ensure we have skilled colleagues including in emerging areas such as Air source heat pumps, mechanical ventilation, and modern construction methods.



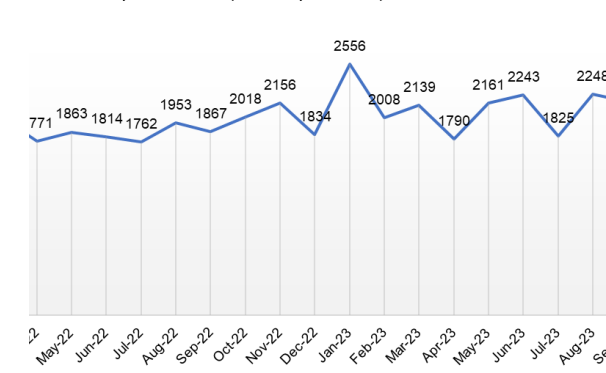
### The role of suppliers

Our in-house teams carry out a significant volume of our work and visit homes regularly in our liveried vehicles. It is crucial that our suppliers share our priorities and are aligned with our values and focus on our residents' needs to help support us in delivering genuine customer excellence.

### Procurement and Contract Management

Our in-house team will not have the capacity or expertise to carry out all our planned investment work or sometimes specialist servicing or compliance work, so we need to have a forward-looking Procurement Plan based on the Council's emerging Corporate Commercial Strategy. Through excellent procurement and contract management, we will have industry leading arrangements that deliver the best outcomes and long-term value for money.

Demand per Month (Inc Inspections)



### Governance, Systems and Processes

As a social housing provider, we are subject to regulation and scrutiny that is designed to maintain and raise standards. We will therefore ensure we have the right systems in place, improving and adjusting these as needed to reflect the financial and other monitoring and reporting requirements of the Regulator for Social Housing and other bodies. We will ensure elected members receive compliance and other operational reporting to enable them to fulfil their governance role. We have also put in place the necessary systems and processes to report on the new range of Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs).

### Performance and Benchmarking

We will have in place a suite of performance indicators for our repair and maintenance services. These will be used to regularly measure and monitor how well we are performing, address shortcomings or failings and help drive continuous improvement. We will also benchmark our performance against that of peers through benchmarking groups, so we have a better understanding of how our costs and the outcomes for residents compare, acting where they are not consistent.

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**Priority:**  
**Having the right resources and governance in place to deliver our work and account for our performance**

**Housing Revenue Account & Other Funding**

As a Council landlord, our activities are funded through the rents we receive into the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The HRA is ringfenced from the Council's General Fund and is intended to operate in a way that supports long-term business planning.

The HRA produces a 30-year business plan to support financial and investment planning, this allows us to factor in major investment programmes such as decarbonisation and building of new Council homes.

Rents collected totalled £35.2m in 2022/23, these are inflated annually in line with Government guidelines / recommendations. These Rents fund Repairs, investment programmes around asset improvement, new build programmes and Tenancy Services.

The table (below) shows the budgeted investment in Asset management and improvements over the period of Ipswich Borough Councils Medium Term financial plan.

Budgets	2023/24 £	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £	2027/28 £
Revenue Repairs	11,067,258	10,652,659	10,865,549	11,082,461	11,304,106
Capital Repairs / Investments	18,901,925	18,917,795	30,775,080	30,311,080	26,111,080
Total Repairs & Improvements	29,969,183	29,570,454	41,640,629	41,393,541	37,415,186
New Build Programme	27,011,260	40,487,980	15,223,680	24,840,000	9,000,000
Total	56,980,443	70,058,434	56,864,309	66,233,541	46,415,186

The HRA 30-year business plan includes a budgeted investment of just over £1 billion over the 30 years for Repairs, asset improvements, investments, and new homes – This includes £171m for Decarbonisation, £15m for Sheltered Housing improvements, £10m for Fire Safety works, £84m for the Kitchens & Bathrooms programme and £114m for planned maintenance works.

These investments are funded from within the Housing Revenue Account using a mix of rent income, external funding (Homes England grants / Right to Buy receipts for new builds, government funding for large investments), HRA reserves and potentially borrowing if necessary.



**To ensure we have the right resources and governance we will:**

- Invest in our workplace and people to ensure the services we provide are 'fit for purpose'.
- Develop a robust Procurement Plan based on procurement and contract management excellence so we maximise the value and benefits of our outsourced works.
- Have in place a suite of performance indicators for our repair, maintenance, and investment activities, including the new Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs). Use these regularly to measure and monitor how well we are performing, address shortcomings or failings and help drive continuous improvement.
- Benchmark our performance against that of peers through benchmarking groups.
- Maximise the capacity within the HRA for investment and seek and secure as much external funding as possible.



# Delivering our asset management priorities

The success of our Asset Management Strategy will rely on our ability to deliver what we have set out to do. Throughout this strategy, we have developed a number of key aims across each of our ten asset management priorities.

These aims form our Action Plan, which is designed to be a flexible, agile, and dynamic. These will be reviewed regularly and updated as legislation emerges. This will ensure this Asset Management Strategy remains 'current' so should be viewed as a living document, that it is continually monitored and reviewed and that it drives forward our activities. The Aims cover all the ten asset management objectives and includes the development and implementation of several initiatives, strategies, and plans.

We cannot deliver everything we want to straightaway, so this means we are going to have to prioritise our time and resources to make sure we strike the right balance in delivering the works and activities across our ten asset management priorities, to ensure our tenants see the maximum benefit.

Our progress in carrying out all our asset management work, activities and initiatives will be constantly reviewed through the governance of Ipswich Borough Council and regularly reported to our elected members, Corporate Management Team (CMT) and our housing panels. This governance includes independent audits and scrutiny.





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