

## IPSC Chair's Briefing: for OSMB meeting on 6 May 2026

### Items covered since the last update meeting:

At the IPSC meeting on 21 April 2026 the following items were considered –

#### 1) Allotments Annual Update 2025

IPSC received an update on the activities of the Rotherham Allotment Alliance Ltd (RAA) over the past year and the recent progress that has been made towards the long-term self-management of Council-owned allotment sites. Councillor Steele attended the meeting as Chair of the RAA and there was discussion around the filling of current vacant spaces on the RAA Board, delays with finalising the lease to RAA and the possibility of the RAA taking over management of other allotments within the Borough.

#### 2) South Yorkshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Members were provided with a summary of the current position on the draft South Yorkshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy, which is being launched by the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA). This strategy will be presented to Cabinet in June and is due to be released for formal public consultation to the four South Yorkshire local authorities in June/July 2026.

Members welcomed the work on a co-ordinated response to bio-diversity and habitat loss and the detailed ground-mapping of the whole South Yorkshire region. However, Members expressed concern about the advisory-only nature of the strategy and the lack of any enforcement powers. There was also discussion about Members considering the Strategy when setting their ward priorities.

As a result of the discussions at IPSC, some additional recommendations were agreed by IPSC, as follows:-

- 1) That the following matter be referred to the Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Management Board for presentation to Cabinet, on behalf of the Improving Places Select Commission, when Cabinet considers the South Yorkshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy in June;
  - That, as part of the Council's wider work on bio-diversity net gain, it be requested that the Service gives consideration to prioritising the development of additional habitat banks within the Borough, to ensure that these are established in advance of any large-scale infrastructure projects which could create an urgent requirement to compensate for habitat loss; and
- 2) That the Chair, on behalf of the Improving Places Select Commission, writes to both the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA) and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) expressing Members' concerns around the advisory nature of the Strategy and the absence of any associated enforcement powers.

### **3) Update on Rotherham Pride in Place Programme**

Members were provided with an update on progress on the Pride in Place programme for both Rotherham Central and Maltby since the last update to IPSC in October 2025. It was explained to Members that the process for recruiting the Neighbourhood Boards for both areas was underway and was now being led by the local MPs for each area, in consultation with the relevant communities. It was also explained that oversight for the Pride in Place programme within RMBC had now moved to the Neighbourhoods Team rather than Regeneration & Environment, although there would be a period of transition. This was due to revised government guidance on the scheme that was published in December 2026 and made it clear that projects under the programme are to be development with community and residents at the forefront.

### **Work Programme Updates**

- **Draft Neighbourhood Leadership Strategy Workshop**

IPSC and OSMB Members were given the opportunity to engage in scrutiny of the draft Neighbourhood Leadership strategy at an interactive workshop which was delivered on 27 April 2026. This strategy represents the first part of a new iteration of the Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy.

This workshop provided Members with an opportunity to help co-produce the new Neighbourhood Leadership Strategy, which will demonstrate how council services and partners will continue (and improve) the support they provide to Ward Members in their community leadership role. The Strategy is due to come to IPSC for further consideration at June's meeting.

### **Items to be discussed at the next meeting:**

At the next meeting of IPSC on 23 June 2026 Members are due to scrutinise the following items:-

- **Draft Neighbourhood Leadership Strategy;** and
- **Update on Housing Strategy Action Plan.**