

Appendix 1: Recommendations Review

	Recommendation	Cabinet Decision (Accepted / Rejected/ Deferred)	Cabinet Response (detailing proposed action if accepted, rationale for rejection, and why and when issue will be reconsidered if deferred)	Accountability	Target date for completion (if applicable)
1.	Consider what resources are required to enable RMBC to lead on the Nature Emergency and co-ordinate its response to the Environment Act 2021, including the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, Enhanced Biodiversity Net Gain, and other statutory reporting.	Accepted	<p>That Cabinet accepts the recommendation from the IPSC review.</p> <p>A corporate, One Council approach is needed for the Council to fulfil the strengthened 'biodiversity duty' introduced by the Environment Act 2021.</p> <p>There are several elements of the strengthened biodiversity duty, for which responsibility is shared across services such as Policy, Green Spaces, Property and Facilities, Grounds and Streets and Planning.</p> <p>Under the Environment Act 2021, public authorities were required to complete their first consideration of what action they should take to conserve and enhance biodiversity by 1 January 2024. Recommendations from the review of nature's recovery in Rotherham undertaken by members of the Improving Places Select Commission may be taken to comprise the Council's 'first consideration' of action it could take. Next and as soon as possible, the Council must agree its policies and objectives for Nature Recovery in Rotherham.</p> <p>There will be a need for monitoring, so that a Biodiversity Report can be published at least every five years; and to measure local progress towards the national '30by30' target, for 30% of land in the UK to be protected and managed for biodiversity by 2030.</p> <p>Complying with the strengthened biodiversity duty will be an administrative burden; will require a significant increase in operational activity; and will involve co-ordination and evidence gathering across multiple Council services and partners in the Borough of Rotherham.</p>	Andrew Bramidge, Interim Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment	December 2024

2.	<p>In line with the RMBC Nature Crisis Motion (and the mandatory Enhanced Biodiversity Duty), consider how RMBC's response to the nature crisis can be implemented, reported, and resourced (taking note of the response to climate action).</p>	Accepted	<p>That Cabinet accepts the recommendation from the IPSC review.</p> <p>As with the Climate Emergency, so the Council's response to the Nature Crisis in Rotherham will have reporting and resource implications across multiple Council services. Climate change action is coordinated between Council services by the 'Climate Change Project Board'. If appropriate, a similar degree of collaboration would support implementation of the Council's response to the Nature Crisis, in line with its statutory duties to conserve and enhance biodiversity.</p> <p>Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRSs) must agree priorities for nature's recovery, supported by specific proposals for creating or improving habitat for nature and wider environmental goals. As a supporting authority, the Council is involved in the preparation of a South Yorkshire LNRS. Once published in 2025, the Council must have due regard to the SY LNRS in considering what action it can take, to conserve and enhance biodiversity in Rotherham. While the SY LNRS must identify "specific practical actions" that would deliver local priorities for nature, it remains for the Council to implement and resource these 'potential measures', in line with legislation and government guidance. The Council will need to report on how it has taken the SY LNRS into account, in statutory Biodiversity Reports.</p> <p>In its first Biodiversity Report, the Council must not only summarise its plans to comply with the duty over the next five years; it must also summarise action it has taken since 1 January 2023. The Council must agree its policies, objectives and actions as soon as possible: it cannot wait for publication of the SY LNRS, before it considers how to conserve and enhance biodiversity.</p> <p>Guidance on complying with the biodiversity duty suggests actions which the Council can take, such as managing allotments, cemeteries, and roadside verges differently for the benefit of Nature Recovery.</p>	<p>Andrew Bramidge, Strategic Director Regeneration & Environment</p>	December 2024
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3.	<p>Consideration be given to the expansion of the Councillors' role as nature champions. This to include:</p> <p>a. How member stewardship of natural assets and geodiversity can be enhanced.</p> <p>b. How nature recovery and climate action can be built into ward plans.</p> <p>c. The involvement in overview and scrutiny in future monitoring and steering of this work.</p> <p>d. Support through the Member Development Programme to ensure Members are equipped with appropriate skills and knowledge to</p>	Accepted	<p>That Cabinet accepts the recommendation from the IPSC review.</p> <p>Members can lead Nature Recovery in Rotherham, by championing actions which conserve and enhance biodiversity: educating, advising, and raising awareness are all recommended by guidance on complying with the biodiversity duty. Opportunities have also been identified for partnership working on tackling rural and wildlife crime.</p> <p>At present, the Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy has responsibilities for Net Zero and Biodiversity Planning in his portfolio. Green Spaces and Recreation and Neighbourhood Working are in the Deputy Leader's portfolio, in his capacity as Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Neighbourhood Working.</p> <p>Members' ward priorities will have mainly been agreed, since they are due to be published by October 2024. However, ward priorities are reviewed annually in June each year, so there will be an opportunity for officers to work with Members, to reflect climate change action and nature recovery in their ward plans. Local, ward-level data on climate change, biodiversity and nature's recovery would support their reflection in ward priorities.</p> <p>Delivering this recommended action will have corporate resource requirements which must be factored into future programme plans.</p>	Jo Brown, Assistant Chief Executive	June 2025
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	undertake this activity.				
4.	Contribute to the South Yorkshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (including appropriate resourcing), detailing Rotherham's involvement in meeting South Yorkshire national and global targets of "30 x 30" as required by the Environment Act 2021.	Accepted	<p>That Cabinet accepts the recommendation from the IPSC review.</p> <p>Work in support of the production of the SY LNRS is already being undertaken by Council officers. Green Spaces and Planning Policy are the two services directly involved.</p> <p>The Council must have regard to the SY LNRS not only with a view to its operational responsibilities under the strengthened biodiversity duty, but also in its role as a Local Planning Authority.</p> <p>In 2020, the Government committed to protecting 30% of land in the UK for nature's recovery, by 2030. The Yorkshire Leaders' Board has endorsed the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission's proposal, that this national target should be reflected regionally and locally, as a 'planning policy principle'. Work to deliver '30by30' in Rotherham needs to be programmed, resourced, timetabled and a lead to be identified; and it is not known how the SY LNRS will support 30by30, sub-regionally.</p>	<p>Polly Hamilton, Assistant Director, Culture Sport and Tourism</p> <p>Simon Moss, Assistant Director, Planning, Regeneration and Transport</p>	March 2026
5.	Consider and plan for how the RMBC estate including all green and blue infrastructure such as allotments, cemeteries, parks and sports fields, amenity spaces, communal gardens, railway and highway	Accepted	<p>That Cabinet accepts the recommendation from the IPSC review, as far as it relates to land owned or maintained by the Council. As noted elsewhere, further resourcing and a corporate, whole Council, approach will be needed to deliver this activity.</p> <p>Guidance on complying with the biodiversity duty lists examples of green and blue infrastructure which are reproduced in the recommendation. Not all of these may be directly relevant e.g., the Council is not responsible for railway verges, which are the responsibility of another public authority (Network Rail) as it considers how it should comply with the duty.</p>	<p>Polly Hamilton, Assistant Director, Culture Sport and Tourism</p> <p>Simon Moss, Assistant Director, Planning,</p>	March 2026

	<p>verges, field margins and hedgerows, rights of way and access routes, woodlands and nature reserves canals, rivers and other water dependent habitats, can contribute to biodiversity strategies and targets, demonstrating compliance with the Council's obligations for the Enhanced Biodiversity Duty (taking external advice where necessary).</p>		<p>Some land which the Council does not own and shares no responsibility for maintaining may nonetheless be within the scope of actions which it can properly take, to conserve and enhance biodiversity:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Council must take reasonable steps to conserve and enhance the special features of sites of special scientific interest (SSSIs) when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carrying out its statutory duties • Giving others permission for works, such as reviewing planning applications. 2. Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs) are sites of substantive nature conservation value: these areas are mainly in private ownership, though the Council does own (in part or in full) a significant proportion of LWSs in Rotherham. LWSs include areas of canals, rivers, railways, fields, Public Rights of Way, woodlands and Local Nature Reserves. The SY LNRS is anticipated to include LWSs, to seek their enhancement and extension for nature recovery. In 2020, it was reported that only 37 of 120 LWSs in Rotherham (30%) were in positive management (Local Plan Monitoring Report 2019 (rotherham.gov.uk)). 3. The Council must comply with UK wildlife law and consider Protected Sites and Species Strategies, as per the strengthened enhanced biodiversity duty introduced by the Environment Act 2021. The Council needs to be aware of habitats and species of principal importance (Habitats and species of principal importance in England - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)). 	<p>Regeneration and Transport</p> <p>Sam Barstow, Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene</p> <p>Kevin Fisher, Assistant Director, Property and Facilities</p>	
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6.	<p>Prioritise Local Wildlife Sites and Woodlands - especially those in RMBC ownership - to contribute to these targets, with a coordinated 'One Council' programme to increase their positive conservation management with resourced management, monitoring and reporting.</p>	Deferred	<p>That Cabinet defers the recommendation from the IPSC review until such time as an Open Spaces Strategy has been commissioned and produced.</p> <p>The Council has commissioned preliminary work on the feasibility of the creation of habitat banks (which would be nature recovery sites) on its own land at Brookfield Park, Pithouse West, Treeton Dike, parcels within Rother Valley Country Park and Treeton Colliery site.</p> <p>LWSs need to be managed to conserve and enhance biodiversity, to enable them to contribute to local, regional, or national biodiversity targets (including '30by30' targets).</p> <p>To bring all the Council's LWSs into positive management will be resource intensive. The creation of management plans for each site and their subsequent delivery are labour intensive and will require additional resource.</p> <p>It is desirable that a new Open Spaces Strategy and Land Audit (replacing the current Green Spaces Strategy) is commissioned, and this should include an audit of LWSs, including priorities for conservation management, which will enable the Council to allocate and prioritise resources.</p>	<p>Polly Hamilton, Assistant Director, Culture Sport and Tourism</p> <p>Simon Moss, Assistant Director, Planning, Regeneration and Transport</p>	March 2027
7.	<p>Continue and expand the positive work already underway including tree planting, meadow management, changes in verge management, community engagement etc (as stated in the RMBC</p>	Accepted	<p>That Cabinet accepts the recommendation from the IPSC review.</p> <p>The Council is well on track to meet its targets to plant at least 100,000 new woodland trees and 5,000 new trees in urban settings, in the ten years to 2031. By the end of the 2023/24 planting season, the Council had already planted c. 5,000 new urban trees and c. 36,000 new trees in woodland settings, creating more than 20 hectares of new woodland in Rotherham.</p> <p>There are significant challenges which may prevent the Council from expanding its existing tree planting programme, not least the availability of land and trees for planting, which are affected by neighbouring local</p>	<p>Polly Hamilton, Assistant Director, Culture Sport and Tourism</p> <p>Sam Barstow, Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene</p>	Ongoing

	<p>Nature Crisis motion).</p>	<p>authorities' and the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority's respective tree planting targets.</p> <p>However, there are opportunities for Nature Recovery in Rotherham, available from bringing existing Council woodlands into positive management. Selective removal of mature trees can support increased biodiversity, by diversifying canopy height and the age of stands; and increasing semi-natural woodlands' capacity to capture and store carbon, in above ground biomass, in soils and in harvested wood products. Harvested wood products are an important carbon store which can have even wider environmental benefits, if they displace products made from less sustainable materials. As noted of LWSs elsewhere in this review, the Council's woodlands are not presently managed for biodiversity or Nature Recovery.</p> <p>To assist the Council to bring its existing woodlands into positive management, the Council's Tree service has attracted more than half a million pounds of external grant funding in the last three years, the benefits of which have been shared between multiple Council services: any proposed revenue investment should be understood in this context.</p> <p>Other positive work is underway to change how the Council manages green infrastructure in Rotherham. Since its first bloom in 2013, a 'river of wildflowers' planted on central reservations of the Rotherham ring road has been widely celebrated for its benefit to pollinators. In the last three years, additional sites have increased the total area planted with wildflowers threefold, from 5,000 to 15,000 square metres.</p> <p>Up to 129 areas have recently been identified where grass cutting schedules may be reduced, subject to agreement between Council services. Since these areas would not generally be planted with wildflower seeds, public engagement and signage may be needed, to ensure that changes in verges' appearance are understood as proactive changes in</p>		
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			<p>management for the benefit of biodiversity and Nature Recovery, not as neglect.</p> <p>These changes in verge management offer a revenue saving for the Council, so there is every reason to continue their expansion to other areas of the Borough, with the continued support of Members and the public.</p>		
8.	<p>Utilise appropriate evidence and information from the forthcoming Rotherham State of Nature report, alongside the forthcoming SY LNRS, and the agreed priority species lists, to set local species recovery targets and work plans, and ensure sufficient resources are secured to embed this approach in long term management opportunities.</p>	Accepted	<p>That Cabinet accepts the recommendation from the IPSC review.</p> <p>The Council has a statutory responsibility to have regard to the SY LNRS when it is published, when considering the policies, objectives and actions it should take to conserve and enhance biodiversity, as per the Environment Act 2021.</p> <p>The Council will need to consider and report how it has taken the SY LNRS, Species and Protected Sites Strategies into account. These strategies' local priority species lists, local species recovery targets and work plans have not yet been published.</p> <p>As a local planning authority, the Council will have to report on Biodiversity Net Gain, including details of biodiversity gains resulting, or expected to result, from approved biodiversity gain plans. The SY LNRS once published will be used to assign strategic significance within the biodiversity metric. This means there will be an incentive for developers to align the location of any off-site Biodiversity Net Gain units, with the SY LNRS.</p> <p>As a supporting authority, the Council will be involved in delivering the SY LNRS: Council officers are members of the SY LNRS 'delivery working group'. The Council will also be involved in reviewing the SY LNRS. Any contribution to SY LNRS monitoring is currently unknown, however there will be a reporting requirement regardless, since the Council must publish a biodiversity report at least every five years.</p>	<p>Polly Hamilton, Assistant Director, Culture Sport and Tourism</p> <p>Simon Moss Planning, Regeneration and Transport</p>	March 2026

9.	Continue to apply robust planning policies and other policy tools to contribute to nature's recovery across the Borough, noting that Local Planning Authorities must have regard to the South Yorkshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy once published.	Accepted	<p>That Cabinet accepts the recommendation from the IPSC review.</p> <p>A Supplementary Planning Document for Biodiversity Net Gain was approved by Cabinet in July 2023.</p> <p>The SY LNRS is due for publication in May 2025: once the Council receives a draft version, it can start to assess the implications for the Borough's local planning policy.</p> <p>The Local Plan allocates land for housing, employment, mixed use and retail uses in the Borough: the Rotherham Local Plan Core Strategy is being partially updated. The Local Plan period is to be extended from 2028 to 2040 and following a recent five-year review of the Sites and Policies document there is currently no intention to amend site allocations at this stage.</p> <p>As a local planning authority, the Council must include the following in its first Biodiversity Report, to be published within 12 weeks of 1 January 2026:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A summary of actions taken to meet its obligations under Biodiversity Net Gain • Details of biodiversity gains resulting or expected to result from approved biodiversity gain plans • A summary of plans to meet BNG obligations in the next five years 	Simon Moss Planning, Regeneration and Transport	Ongoing
10.	Plan to work towards zero non-essential use of pesticides and zero glyphosate by the Council.	Deferred	<p>That Cabinet defers the recommendation from the IPSC review.</p> <p>Other local authorities have trialled alternatives to glyphosate: due to significant increased operational costs, outcomes from those trials would appear to recommend a reduction in the use of glyphosate, not an end to its use entirely. Some of the available alternatives to glyphosate which have a less negative environmental impact are themselves pesticides, such as pelargonic acid.</p>	Sam Barstow, Assistant Director Community Safety and Street Scene	March 2026

		<p>Weeds cannot be left completely unmanaged, without unintended, negative environmental impacts: e.g., repairing damage to pavements and gullies may have a high carbon impact, from embodied carbon in construction materials. There are no known existing alternatives to glyphosate which could maintain the same level of weed suppression, without increased operational costs i.e., without additional revenue investment. Recent investment in street cleansing is helping to manage weeds by preventing build-up of detritus before weeds can germinate.</p> <p>It may be that some or all residents would support a lower level of weed suppression, in their local areas. However, a lower level of weed suppression might lead to an increase in the number of complaints or requests for reactive grounds and streets maintenance received by the Council, with a consequent demand on resources.</p> <p>In deferring the recommendation, where ward members consent, it is proposed to trial three alternatives to glyphosate, in a ward or wards nominated by Members or where there is some other demonstration of community support, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Manual removal○ Pelargonic acid treatment○ Hot foam treatment <p>Over a trial period of at least six months, in spring and summer 2025, the Council would monitor complaints and compliments received, assess treatments' effectiveness, and assess real versus expected cost increases.</p> <p>Where alternative treatments are not effective, the Council will have to consider applying glyphosate even within some trial areas, where there is an unacceptable level of risk to public safety e.g., from slippery paving stones.</p>		
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			<p>The manual removal trial is proposed to be carried out within existing resources to determine the level of resource intensity this is likely to require. However, should this be found to be detrimental to service delivery elsewhere, other less resource intensive measures will be undertaken instead.</p> <p>Outcomes from the proposed trial may be expected to inform the Council's first Biodiversity Report, in which it must set out plans to comply with the strengthened biodiversity duty introduced by the Environment Act 2021; hence a target date of 26 March 2026 has been set to reconsider the deferred recommendation, the date by which the Biodiversity Report must be published.</p>		
11.	Work with communities to support expansion of household composting, and supporting the development of nature rich gardens, including through awareness raising of the waste hierarchy and minimising the use of new and scarce resources and the associated impacts on the natural environment that these issues have;	Deferred	<p>That Cabinet defers the recommendation from the IPSC review.</p> <p>As noted in the scrutiny review recommendation, substantive resourcing will be needed to deliver the recommended work with communities, to support expansion of household composting and to raise awareness of the waste hierarchy; notwithstanding the BDR Waste Partnership Community Education Liaison Officer's existing resource. For this reason, the recommendation is deferred to March 2025, when Full Council may choose to resource such an engagement programme.</p> <p>Household composting is not only about composting at home: the Council's garden waste collection service collects and composts garden waste from households in Rotherham. The Council will continue to support expansion of household composting, by seeking new subscriptions to its garden waste service; and will seek further opportunities to support 'composting at home' e.g., through Social Value committed by waste management contractors.</p>	Sam Barstow, Assistant Director Community Safety and Street Scene	March 2025

	substantive resourcing and engagement plans will be essential.				
12.	Work with partners, stakeholders, Town and Parish Councils, communities, schools and residents on the above where appropriate.	Accepted	<p>That Cabinet accepts the recommendation from the IPSC review.</p> <p>There is existing work between the Council, its partners and other stakeholders, relevant to biodiversity and nature recovery in Rotherham. Climate change and sustainability officers representing members of the Rotherham Together Partnership have met to share learning and information relevant to biodiversity and nature recovery; Love Where you Live volunteer coordinators, neighbourhood coordinators, trees and woodland engagement officers and countryside rangers have led public engagement and interpretation. However, a dedicated communications and engagement programme could open new opportunities, through greater coordination and by reaching a wider audience.</p> <p>Neighbourhood-working can promote and encourage collaboration between stakeholders, to continue or commence projects which contribute to Nature Recovery in Rotherham. This may be through communication such as ward e-bulletins, supporting campaigns, signposting communities and organisations to support and funding; though the allocation of Neighbourhood Co-ordinators' resource is ultimately determined by Members' ward plan priorities.</p> <p>The Green Spaces Review has identified a need for increased engagement activity via the Ranger Services, both in relation to Nature Recovery/biodiversity and increasing physical activity (in support of health and wellbeing). This work is likely to be attractive to funders and Green Spaces service will continue to investigate opportunities for investment in engagement work, in addition to Council resources.</p>	<p>Polly Hamilton, Assistant Director, Culture Sport and Tourism</p> <p>Jo Brown, Assistant Chief Executive</p>	March 2026

13.	That consideration be given to how the process for the adoption of community wildlife sites be streamlined.	Accepted	<p>That Cabinet accepts the recommendation from the IPSC review.</p> <p>The Community Asset Transfer Policy is due for review and this presents an opportunity to include specific provision for enhancing biodiversity and streamlining the process for adoption of community wildlife sites.</p> <p>There are published selection criteria and a framework for Rotherham's Local Wildlife System which together determines the selection and designation process for Local Wildlife Sites in Rotherham: local-wildlife-system-parts-1-and-2 (rotherham.gov.uk).</p>	Polly Hamilton, Assistant Director, Culture Sport and Tourism	March 2026
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