

ECONOMY AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

BULLETIN ITEM

Subject: **Pride in Place Programme**

Date: **20 August 2026**

Assistant Chief Executive: **Place**

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 In accordance with the Council decision of 26 March 2026, this bulletin provides an update on progress with the Pride in Place Programme. Since approval was given to participate in the Programme, activity has focused on putting the key building blocks in place, including the appointment of Neighbourhood Board Co-Chairs and the development of the arrangements needed to support the Programme locally. Work is now progressing on recruitment of the Neighbourhood Board and preparation of Sutherland's first Pride in Place Plan

2 Appointment of Neighbourhood Board Co-Chairs

- 2.1 An important early milestone has been the appointment of Co-Chairs for the Sutherland Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board. Following an open recruitment process, the appointments provide the independent leadership needed to help shape the next stage of the Programme and support a strong community-led approach.
- 2.2 The Co-Chairs will lead the establishment of the Neighbourhood Board, oversee recruitment of Board members and help shape the Programme's approach to community engagement. Working with residents, community organisations, businesses, Highland Council and the local MP, they will help ensure that local priorities and aspirations are reflected in future investment decisions.
- 2.3 Community leadership, local involvement and transparent decision-making are at the heart of the Pride in Place Programme. Recent correspondence from MHCLG has also reinforced the expectation that Neighbourhood Boards should operate independently and develop towards a community-led delivery model over the lifetime of the Programme. The appointment of the Co-Chairs is an important step in putting these principles into practice and creating the foundations for the work ahead.

3 Recruitment of Neighbourhood Board

- 3.1 Following the appointment of the Co-Chairs, work is now underway to recruit members of the Sutherland Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board. In line with programme guidance, the Board will be resident-led and bring together a broad mix of perspectives from across the area, including community representatives, businesses, the public sector and the voluntary sector.
- 3.2 An open Expression of Interest process is being developed to encourage participation from individuals and organisations across the programme area. This approach will help ensure recruitment is transparent and inclusive while encouraging participation from those who want to help shape the area's future.
- 3.3 Alongside recruitment, membership criteria and arrangements for elected member representation are being developed to help ensure that the Board reflects both the geography and the communities it serves.

4 Programme Development

- 4.1 The Co-Chairs and Highland Council have started work on the governance arrangements that will support the operation of the Neighbourhood Board. This will include the procedures, protocols and supporting documentation needed to ensure transparent, accountable and effective decision-making, while reflecting the Programme's emphasis on community leadership, local ownership and resident-led decision-making.
- 4.2 Preparatory work has also begun on the Sutherland Pride in Place Plan. The Plan will set out a long-term vision for the area together with priorities for investment during the first phase of the Programme. It will build on existing evidence, plans and local priorities and, most importantly, be informed by community engagement led by the Neighbourhood Board.

5 Next Steps

- 5.1 The immediate focus is on completing recruitment of the Neighbourhood Board and finalising the arrangements needed to support its work.
- 5.2 Once the Board is in place, it will lead a programme of community engagement to identify local priorities and help develop a shared vision for the future of the area. This will inform preparation of the Sutherland Pride in Place Plan, which is due to be submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government by 30 November 2026.
- 5.3 The Council, Neighbourhood Board Co-Chairs and the local MP will continue to engage with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government as the Programme progresses, including on matters relating to implementation and the designated programme area.

- 5.4 Further updates will be provided to Members as the Programme moves from its establishment phase into community engagement, plan development and the delivery of longer-term priorities.

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive

Date: 28 July 2026

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Background Papers: None