

NEIGHBOURHOOD

**Area Committee
Dorking and Villages**

**MAKE IT
HAPPEN**

Dorking and the Villages Neighbourhood Area Committee (NAC)

02 October 2025 Meeting Notes



Dorking and Villages Neighbourhood Area Committee 02 October 2025 Meeting Notes

Time: 14:00 – 16:00.

Address: Beare Green Village Hall, Merebank, Beare Green, Surrey, RH5 4RD

Chair:

- **Hazel Watson – County Councillor, Surrey County Council**

Vice Chair:

- **Sally Dubery – Chief Officer, Central Surrey Voluntary Action**

Attendees:

Helyn Clack – County Councillor
Dineke Van den Bogerd – District Councillor
Will Dennis – Parish Councillor
James Green – Police Borough Commander
Emma Cox – Health
Jon Mears – Westcott Village Hub
Stephen Cooksey – County Councillor & District
Deborah (Debbie) Jones – Parish Councillor
David Preedy – Parish Councillor
Paul Bowyer – Surrey Fire and Rescue Service
Jo McGowan – Business/BID
Michaela – Mid Surrey Community Fridge
Glyn Marchant – Mary Francis Trust
Samantha Botsford – Healthwatch Surrey Contract Manager
Hazel Watson – Twin Hatter (County & District Councillor)
Bradley Nelson – District Councillor
William Harmsworth – Parish Councillor
Pat Smith – Pixham Residents Association
Michael Arnaud – Dorking Health Care
Alison Boyd – Citizens Advice Mole Valley
Sally Dubery – Central Surrey Voluntary Action
Wendy Saunders – Circular Dorking

Additional attendees:

Uma Datta – Surrey County Council (Presenter)
Rachel O'Reilly, Mole Valley District Council (Facilitator)
James Painter, Surrey County Council (Facilitator)
Michelle Bradley, Surrey County Council (Facilitator)

Rowena Zelle, Surrey County Council
Karen Dransfield, Surrey County Council
Mila Ekel, Surrey County Council

Apologies:

Councillor Kirstie Havard Mole Valley District Council

Dr Robin Gupta – GP Health

Nelson Porter – Churches Together

Charles (Charlie) Allen – Clarion Futures

Apologies from Katie Burrows Executive Assistant to Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team
on behalf of Chris Panting, Head Teacher and Stuart Ketley, Senior Pastoral Manager

District Councillor Abhiram Magesh

Judith Brooks - YMCA

Sonia Hubbard - Age Concern

Sarah Crabbe - Mount Green Housing Association

AGENDA & TIMINGS



No.	ITEM	Timings	Minutes
1.	Welcome - session aims and key outcomes	14:00 – 14:10	10
2.	Neighbourhood Area Committees Recap and Progress update	14:10 – 14:25	15
3.	Terms of Reference and ways of working	14:25 – 14:40	15
	Break	14:40 – 14:50	10
4.	Data and insights - Presentation and small group discussions	14:50 – 15:50	60
5.	Next steps and session close	15:50 – 16:00	10

Agenda Item 2 – Neighbourhood Area Committees Recap and Progress update

- **Purpose of item:**

Reintroduce the NACs and provide an update on progress since July meeting.

- Feedback provided under this item

- Helyn Clack & David Preedy – David mentioned about the amount of change happening and there being a lot of consultation. David asked if it was felt

that what we are doing now would actually be taken forward. Helyn responded that a lot of the work taking place at the moment follows the directive given by central government and therefore feels like the right thing to be doing right now.

Agenda Item 3 – Terms of reference and ways of working

- **Purpose of item:**
 - Explanation on what the Terms of Reference covers
 - Ratify the Terms of Reference (ToR).
 - Agree on communication preferences and other ways of working.
 - Introduce Chair and Vice Chair
- **Feedback provided under this item**
 - Jon Mears asked how the Terms of Reference could be adapted if needed in future. The answer given to this question was that the current Terms of Reference will only be for the pilot.
 - Stephen Cooksey communicated that he felt that there should be a more democratic way of adopting the chairs going forward.
 - Wendy Saunders asked how we will ensure everywhere is represented if not all areas are parished?
- **Summary actions**
 - Chair Hazel Watson and Vice Chair Sally Dubery introduced and that the Chair and Vice Chair kindly fulfil the roles for duration of the pilot.
 - That the Terms of Reference be adopted for the pilot phase, but be open to further adaption beyond this phase in line with the test and learn approach

Agenda Item 4 – Data Insights Presentation and small group discussions

- **Purpose of item:**
 - Presentation - Introduce NAC members to the data and insights pack: its purpose, contents, and how to contribute.
 - Small Group Discussion 1. Reflections on the Emerging Insights slides key observations, gaps, and how insights can inform priorities.
 - Small Group Discussion 2. agreeing priorities to take forward.
- Small Group Discussion 1 Feedback: Reflections insight pack
Gaps
 - Business challenges particularly in town centres
 - Lifestyle factors

- Ethnicity and trends
- How all the areas are linked and interdependent
- Energy costs, fuel poverty
- More localised data would be helpful
- Refer to the loneliness and isolation JSNA

Positives

- Build on our positive assets
- Relationship between business and community
- Good connection to the community
- Lots of community groups and VCSE in the area
- Stable medical practise low turnover of GPs so trusted relationships built.
- The villages are well served by primary care not quite the same for mental health services.

- Small Group Discussion 1: Reflections on insight pack, emerging trends

- **Transport and Connectivity Gaps**

- Lack of coordination across agencies and operators, especially around roadworks and diversions causing wider disruption.
- Need for clearer information on transport affordability and demand-responsive services.
- Public transport is often unavailable or unaffordable; better promotion of services like Surrey Connect could reduce isolation.
- Parking constraints, including private land ownership, make some train stations inaccessible or unsafe for pedestrians.
- Concern over whether new housing developments will include adequate public transport planning.
- When police ask Mole Valley residents what they are most concerned about speeding, anti-social driving, and ASB, while police prioritise high-impact crimes like burglary and violence.
- Digital exclusion remains an issue — not just due to tech skills or preferences, but also poor broadband access, contributing to isolation.

- **Community and Environmental Pressures**

Concerns include:

- Flooding
- River pollution
- Increased risk of common and woodland fires due to warmer, drier weather

- Biodiversity loss
 - Rising energy costs
 - Noise pollution (especially in areas like Mickleham, where it is a top concern)
 - Impact of new developments — more noise and traffic
 - Insights from the Local Resilience Forum, Flood Forums, and Environment Agency
 - Learning from strong community groups like BERT (Brockham Emergency Response Team)
- **Housing Affordability Crisis**
 - Widespread lack of affordable housing, including social housing, impacts recruitment and retention—especially for key workers.
 - Residents forced to leave the area to downsize affordably.
 - High housing costs prevent local families from staying, weakening family support networks.
 - Tension between housing demand and concerns about overdevelopment; new builds often don't match local needs (e.g. lack of suitable downsizing options).
 - Poor housing standards—issues with damp, mould, and negligent landlords.
 - Ongoing challenges in maintaining Housing Association properties; councillors feel limited influence over quality and upkeep.
 - Many issues faced by police stem from poor housing, deprivation, and lack of access to education.
- **Youth and Vulnerability Challenges**
 - SMEs struggle to recruit locally due to high living costs and lack of nearby Higher Education (HE) institutions.
 - Limited access to Further and Higher Education, especially for rural areas and young families.
 - Deprivation affecting rural areas and South Dorking children and young people (CYP).
 - Rising NEETs despite strong school performance; schools facing falling pupil numbers.
 - Insufficient SEND provision.
 - Lack of youth activities; growing demand as families move in, contributing to antisocial behaviour (ASB).
 - Poor mental health among young people; limited access to support services.

- Aging population and unpaid carers; youth provision still inadequate.
- **Small Group Discussion 2. agreeing priorities to take forward.**

Priorities identified in table discussions

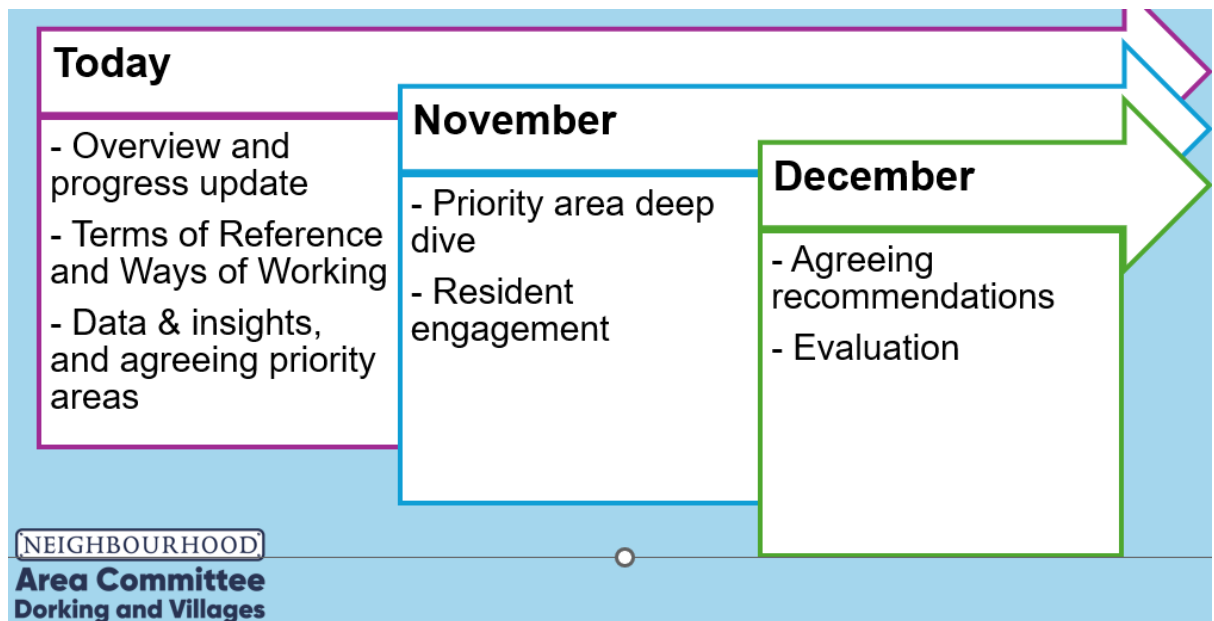
- ISOLATION & LONELINESS and loneliness in all ages.
- There was a feeling that this is linked to a number of issues including rural nature of geography and lack of TRANSPORT links, effective communication of what's available in the way of services and activities, leads to decline in mental and physical health etc.
- DEPRIVATION - Demographics
- HOUSING - long term priority - Park homes.
- Hidden deprivation- difference in high and low income. Think about the use of community provision
- YOUTH VOICE
- mental health
- Complexity of need

Headline Priority arising from the NAC

Prioritising deprivation in the area. This would include loneliness, isolation, mental health issues, lack of transport and cost of living

Agenda Item 5 Next Steps and Session Close

- **Next Steps**



- **Final points**
 - How will the NAC be any better than what is currently in place?
 - The NAC having funding would make a difference
 - Could Priorities change each time the NAC meets?
 - There are two things happening in the pilot – 1. Being a NAC and 2. Evaluating how it is working, could these be addressed slightly separately in the future agendas
 - Side note – we have no representative from employment/skills/jobs. Should we include them?
 - Helyn Clack suggested creating a newsletter after each NAC meeting for wider distribution.
- **Dates of future meetings**
 - **11 November 14:00 -16:00**
Betchworth Village War Memorial Hall (Geoffrey Browne Room), Station Road, Betchworth RH3 7DF
 - **08 December 14:00 – 16:00**
Small hall at Dorking Christian Centre, Church Street, Dorking RH4 1DW