

Neighbour Area Committees

The current Epsom and Ewell Borough Council (EEBC) Community Governance Review (CGR) proposes for public consultation the creation of two elected Community Councils for Epsom and Ewell respectively. EEBC’s consultation documents describe how Community Councils will be established, elected and their responsibilities. The CGR does not mention an alternative forum intended to enhance local influence over the decision-making of the East Surrey Unitary Council that will take over all the functions of EEBC except allotments. An alternative under discussion in other districts of Surrey are being called “Neighbour Area Committees”.

The Epsom and Ewell Times brings to its readers an explanation of NACs with reference to a pilot in Mole Valley.

Dorking and the Villages Neighbourhood Area Committee

One of the first **Neighbourhood Area Committees piloted in Surrey** is the **Dorking and the Villages NAC** (also referred to simply as “Dorking and Villages”). (Surrey County Council)

This NAC is part of the initial group of pilots alongside **East Elmbridge, North Tandridge** and **Farnham**. (Surrey County Council)

What NACs are designed to do

The NACs do *not* have statutory powers or the ability to raise a tax precept. Instead, they are being developed as **advisory, collaborative community engagement structures** aimed at:

- understanding key local issues
- agreeing priorities and championing collaborative action
- promoting preventative activity
- supporting thriving communities
- acting as advisory bodies sharing local insight with strategic decision-makers. (Surrey County Council)

Typical membership and partner representation

According to the official Surrey County Council NAC guidance, membership is intended to bring together a broad range of voices and expertise drawn from:

1. Elected representatives

- County councillors
- District and borough councillors
- Town and parish councillors (where they exist) (Surrey County Council)

2. Partner organisations

- Health sector representatives (e.g., NHS bodies or health partners)
- Police representatives (e.g., local policing teams)
- Fire and rescue representatives
- Education and business sector representatives (Surrey County Council)

3. Community and voluntary sector participants

- Voluntary Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) groups
- Youth organisations, resident associations, and other local groups nominated to represent community interest (Surrey County Council)

4. Officer support

- Surrey County Council Community Partnership Officers
- Additional officer support covering communications, engagement, research and policy areas (Surrey County Council)

This model emphasises **inclusive and collaborative representation**, drawing on expertise and lived experience from a wide range of sectors, rather than confining participation to elected councillors alone.

What membership looks like in practice

While specific published membership lists for each NAC pilot are still evolving as the pilots shape their terms of reference, the guidance indicates that the committees will typically **include representatives from all of the groups listed above**, working together to:

- set shared local priorities
- review local data and insight
- feed those priorities back up to higher-level strategic authorities such as the new unitary councils
- coordinate local partner activity for community benefit.

The NAC websites for pilots like Dorking and the Villages provide engagement hubs where local residents can see **meeting agendas, draft terms of reference, updates, priorities and ways to get involved** as these bodies develop. (Surrey County Council)