

Neighbourhood and Communities Group

Minutes

Date	Monday, 7 July 2026
Time	11am – 12.30pm
Location	Magna Carta Room Civic Centre, Station Road, Addlestone, KT15 2AH

Attendees:

- Daniel Lloyd, Head of Housing Operations
- Deana Humphries, Head of Tenancy Management
- Angela Horsey, Business Development and Policy Manager
- Robert Burge, Estate Services Team Leader
- Kerrie Hearn, ASB Officer
- Andrea Norman-Walker, Engagement and Inclusion Officer
- tenants

1. Welcome and report on actions agreed at the last meeting

Andrea Norman-Walker, Housing Engagement and Inclusion Officer, welcomed all participants attending in person and online. She advised the Group that seven (corrected: eight) apologies had been received, including from the Chair. In his absence, she chaired the meeting.

Andrea provided a brief update on actions from the previous meeting, including parking issues at Mallet Close and Grove Road, and maintenance concerns. She advised that progress had been made on all actions and that further details would be provided later in the meeting by Robert Burge, Estate Services Team Leader.

Andrea invited residents to participate in a Complaints Handling Self-Assessment Focus Group. The group will meet once or twice to support the Council in reviewing its complaints handling arrangements against Housing Ombudsman guidance. Two members volunteered to participate, and Andrea advised that she would circulate an email seeking further volunteers.

2. Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

Kerrie Hearn, the Housing Anti-Social Behaviour Officer, introduced her role and outlined the ASB service:

- The team currently manages around 15–20 active ASB cases and works closely with Surrey Police, Adult Social Care, Environmental Health and other agencies.
- New legislation introduced Respect Orders, which replace the previous civil injunctions. It means that, rather than simply imposing prohibitions on people, we require them to take positive actions to improve themselves under the injunction. These requirements can also be legally binding.

- We also now have a separate Housing Injunction, which is generally more appropriate for us to use. In addition, we utilise Community Protection Warnings (CPWs) and Community Protection Notices (CPNs), which place a legal obligation on individuals to address the issues identified. These powers are typically used for matters such as overgrown gardens, excessive noise, and other behaviours that negatively affect the local community. We can also issue Fixed Penalty Notices of up to £500 where individuals fail to comply with the requirements of a Community Protection Notice.
- Residents can report ASB via phone, email, website or in person.
- Members discussed concerns about ongoing ASB cases, response times and communication with residents. Officers explained the ASB process, including risk assessments, evidence gathering, action plans and regular reviews.
- A key theme raised by residents was the need for **more frequent updates and better communication** throughout investigations.

3. Communication Strategy

Daniel Lloyd, Head of housing Operations presented an overview of the Council's developing **Communication Strategy**:

- The strategy's aim is to improve how residents receive information, ensuring communication is timely, relevant and accessible.
- Proposed communication methods include: newsletters; resident groups and panels; emails and text messages; estate inspections and drop-in sessions; website updates and online services; surveys and noticeboards.
- We would like residents to tell us what information they would like to receive from the council, how they would prefer to receive it, and how often they would like updates. This could include updates on ongoing cases or issues such as lift breakdowns. We are also seeking views on the communication standards the council should meet, including reasonable response times to emails and other enquiries, so that expectations are clear and our performance can be measured.

Residents highlighted the importance of clear timescales for responses and regular updates on issues such as repairs, ASB cases and lift breakdowns.

Daniel reiterated that feedback from residents will help shape the final strategy.

As an example of the need for better communication, residents raised ongoing concerns about frequent lift breakdowns at Darley Dene and the impact these have on vulnerable residents. Officers confirmed that they are reviewing options to reduce disruptions, including longer-term solutions and potential accessibility improvements. It was agreed that residents would be provided with regular updates and sufficient information regarding progress and proposed actions.

Andrea confirmed that this topic is on the agenda for the next Repairs and Maintenance Group meeting where the Head of Technical Services will provide further details.

4. Estate Services updates

Estate Improvement Projects

Lasswade Court: an update was provided on the communal garden redevelopment project:

- The site has now been cleared, and work is due to start in early September.
- Planned improvements include new grassed areas, drying areas, a new bin store, additional parking
- Further resident consultation will take place on landscaping and final improvements.

Parking and estate issues

- **Beechtree Avenue:** Consultation launched on converting unused drying areas into additional parking and gathering feedback on underused communal spaces.
- **Malet Close:** Additional parking proposals were found to be unfeasible because of substantial costs due to the underground services. An on-site meeting will be arranged with residents to discuss alternatives.
- **Grove Road:** Updates provided on footpaths, overgrown trees, width restrictors and maintenance concerns. Further follow-up will be undertaken.
- **Essex Close:** Waste collection access has improved following the use of smaller bin vehicles. Parking concerns remain under Surrey County Council's (SCC). A member of the Group who is also a resident of Darley Dene is in contact with SCC and is following up on its decision to install a single yellow line. No implementation date has been provided. A further step will be to seek SCC's agreement to install a double yellow line instead.
- **Garfield Road Estate - services update**
 - Litter picking, clearance work and abandoned vehicle removals have been completed on the Garfield Road Estate and is ongoing.
 - Communal Sheds & Cupboards reorganisation works are underway starting with Sussex & Hampshire Court, followed by Middlesex Court and then finally Surrey Towers as this is a large project.
 - A recent fly-tipping incident was identified through CCTV, and enforcement action is being taken.

A new Estate Services email address has been introduced to improve reporting and communication: Estate.services@runnymede.gov.uk

Ground maintenance

- Residents raised concerns about overgrown hedges affecting footpath (Braeside), communal cleaning (119 Grove Road), empty properties affected by mould (Braeside), garden maintenance at temporary accommodation properties (Braeside), bench repairs in New Haw.
- Officers agreed to investigate specific issues raised and provide updates outside the meeting.

Communal cleaning

- Communal cleaning (117 – 123 Grove Road) officers confirmed that regular cleaning takes place with last visit being 2nd June 2026.

Resident involvement

- Officers highlighted plans to increase opportunities for residents to suggest and influence estate improvement projects.

- Future processes will allow residents to nominate improvement ideas for consideration across Council estates.

Victory Park

The Committee has approved keeping the gates open. This will begin next week after the fair leaves. The gates will be closed from 29 July to 1 August during Runnymede Live to protect event equipment, but otherwise the park will remain open when no events are taking place.

Naomi Barrett, Community Development Project Officer, updated the Group on plans for Victory Park. Funding of £100,000 has been allocated to upgrade the playground, with a further £35,000 for sensory, communication and sign language boards across playgrounds in the Borough.

5. Feedback on ASB Policy and Communal Areas Policy

Deana Humphries, Head of Tenancy Services provided feedback on the two policies that were approved by the Housing Committee in June:

Communal Area Policy

Deana provided an update on changes made to the Communal Area Policy in response to tenant feedback and consultation comments. Key amendments included:

- Formalising existing arrangements within Independent Retirement Living (IRL) schemes by incorporating mobility scooter storage provisions into the policy, ensuring it reflects current practice.
- Strengthening provisions relating to mobility scooters and mobility aids by clarifying that they must not be stored or charged in communal areas due to fire and safety risks. The policy now recognises that residents with disabilities may require such equipment and confirms that alternative storage solutions will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Confirming that an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) was reviewed as part of the policy update process and that reference to the EQIA has been included within the policy scope, definitions and legislation section.
- Removing the suggestion of discretionary enforcement and maintaining a zero-tolerance approach to items stored in communal areas due to the associated health and safety risks.
- Updating information relating to the Torts (Interference with Goods) Act 1977 to provide greater clarity on the process for dealing with abandoned items, including the use of a risk-based approach when determining removal and storage arrangements.
- Amending the section relating to abandoned vehicles to clarify that the Council will undertake appropriate checks to establish ownership and confirm that relevant criteria are met before taking action.

Overall, the amendments sought to improve clarity, strengthen safety measures, ensure consistency with current operating practices, and reflect tenant feedback while maintaining a strong focus on fire and safety considerations.

ASB Policy

- A new section has been added to clarify that, while certain activities would not normally be considered Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), the Council will review situations where the activity becomes excessive and make decisions on a case-by-case basis. The amendment also emphasises the Council's commitment to supporting residents who report ASB concerns, including signposting to relevant services and offering support or coaching where appropriate. In addition, the update reinforces that any action taken must be proportionate to the issues being experienced. This change provides greater clarity, flexibility, and a supportive approach to managing ASB concerns.
- Residents welcomed clarification that the Council will continue to work with partner agencies (such as Police, Children's Services, Adult Services, voluntary organisations) even when the Council is not the lead agency responsible for an investigation.
- The key concern raised was **communication and feedback**. Residents want to be kept informed about actions being taken and which agencies are involved where possible.
- Deana explained that there may be circumstances where they cannot disclose details of partner agencies or investigations, but they will continue to work collaboratively and provide updates where appropriate.
- An amendment to the policy clarifies that in some cases other agencies must complete their actions before the Council can take housing enforcement action. This is particularly relevant in cases involving serious crime, where criminal proceedings or convictions may be required before further housing action can be taken.
- Residents acknowledged the need for partnership working but stressed that delays and lack of updates can leave tenants feeling that nothing is being done.

6. Tenant Engagement Strategy

Angela Horsey, Business Development and Policy Manager advised the Group that the Tenant Engagement Strategy [Tenant Engagement Strategy](#) is due for review and invited members to help shape the new approach to engagement.

Group members asked for:

- Two-way information
- "Come back to us" with updates – after reporting issues, if you hear nothing, it creates frustration and uncertainty
- Use photos to show changes made
- Communication, especially for older residents and people who need more support
- Greater transparency about how tenant feedback is used and what difference it makes.

Regarding involving more tenants, suggestions included:

- Promoting involvement more widely through noticeboards and resident communications
- Local groups and community networks
- Making engagement opportunities more visible and accessible.

7. Service Standards

Angela explained that new Service Standards aim to set out the Council's promises to tenants. They will include response times, communication expectations and standards of service. (Please see example here: [BCP Homes customer service standards](#))

Residents expressed support for developing clear standards that define what tenants can expect from the Council.

There was recognition that the Council is seeking significant tenant input on multiple documents, but residents agreed this ongoing engagement is important for improving services.

8. New Terms of Reference

The new Terms of Reference was approved.

Actions:

- Focus group volunteers to be sought for the complaints self-assessment review
- Follow up on the new Communications and Engagement Strategy
- Consultation on the Service Standards
- Issues identified for follow-up: Malet Close: an on-site meeting to discuss alternatives, Grove Road: follow up on ground maintenance issues; overgrown hedges and garden maintenance at TA properties (Braeside), ground maintenance (Orchard Way/Monk's Crescent), communal cleaning (119 Grove Road), bench repairs in New Haw.

9. AOB

Next meeting is on 7 September at 11am. Tea/coffee will be available from 10.30am.