

What is neighbourhood planning ?

- The Government's Localism Act aims to reform the planning system to give local people new opportunities to shape the development of the communities in which they live.
- The previous regime of 'top down' imposed housing and employment figures from national and regional government is being removed. In its place is a 'bottom up' approach with 'localism' at its heart. In simple terms, this means that local people can now have a greater role in shaping development which happens in their area.
- The Act contains three new community-led initiatives; Neighbourhood Development Plans, Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders.

Neighbourhood Development Plans

- These are optional planning documents which are developed by communities to help shape future development by influencing the type, design, location and mix of new development – they cannot not stop development. In most cases in the Vale these will be developed by parish councils, although NDP do not necessarily have to follow parish boundaries. For non-parished areas NDP can be prepared through a Neighbourhood Forum. Forum memberships can consist of residents and business but have to be agreed by the district council.
- A Neighbourhood Development Plan will set out a vision for the area and policies on the development of land. It will focus on local issues rather than district wide issues. For example policies may identify where new shops, businesses and homes should be located and what green spaces should be protected.
- NDP's are very different to other local level planning documents such as Community Led Plans (formerly known as Parish Plans) and Village Design Statements as these cover all things important to a community and do not have any legal weight in planning decisions
- Once adopted, a NDP will become **a formal part of the planning policy** for the neighbourhood area alongside the new district wide development plan – 'The Vale of Aylesbury Plan' (this will be replacing the 2004 Local Plan). As these forms a formal document they must be in line with local and national planning policies. A NDP cannot plan for less development than what is set in the Vale of Aylesbury Plan, but can plan for more development.
- Decision-makers will be obliged, by law, to take what it says into account when they consider proposals for development in the neighbourhood . This is the first time local communities have been able to write a planning document which will have the same weight in determining planning applications as the district planning policy documents.
- Once the Plan is drafted and consulted on by the community. It then goes through an examination process, and finally is adopted through a referendum (simple 50%+1% of turn out to adopt).

Neighbourhood Development Orders

- These can grant planning permission for specific developments in a neighbourhood area, for example a certain type of household extension or shop front, or it may identify a particular type of use for an area of land, for example a new village hall.
- Where there is a neighbourhood development order in place there is no need to apply to the council for planning permission for the development it covers.
- The processes involved are very similar to a Neighbourhood Development Plan except the order is for a specific location, rather than a larger parish area.
- Like with NDP an examination and referendum is required. Where there must be support from more than 50% of voters in a referendum.
- The advantage of this is it allows the community to express exactly how they would like a particular piece of land to be developed, rather than leaving it up to a developer.

Community Right to Build Order

- These are very similar to a Neighbourhood Development Order allowing for appropriately constituted community groups will be able to identify land for new, small scale development such new homes, shops or other community facilities, without the need to apply for planning permission.. This can be carried out by a town or parish council **or any community group**, e.g. a town or village society. Community Right to Build organisations must have at least 10 people living in a particular area (from different homes). Like a Neighbourhood Development Plan, there must be more than 50% of voters in support of the proposal held in a referendum for the plan to be adopted. The Community Right to Build can not be used to expand the size of communities by more than 10 per cent over a 10 year period.

IMPORTANT :

- All of these are discretionary – **a community does not have to have them** it is up to you.
- For all of these neighbourhood planning tools, in order for them to be adopted, **they will need to conform with planning policies and guidance at the district, national and European level.** They will also need to demonstrate support from the local community.
- For Aylesbury Vale district, a Neighbourhood Plan will need to be in general compliance with the District Policy, the Vale of Aylesbury Plan. This is currently being developed and is due to be completed by spring 2013, which will replace the current 2004 Local Plan.

What can it do & can't do?

- It has to be in general conformity with the district level plan and government policy – it can not challenge this. A Neighbourhood Plan is part of planning policy – planning policy has to 'enable development'. **In other words this is not a process of saying 'no' to development.**
- A plan can be as simple as a single policy, or as complex as a district wide document. It is up to you as the community to decide what you think you need to address in more detail than will be covered at the district level.

Why do it ?

- Developing a Neighbourhood Plan can help communities to play a greater role in shaping the future of their area.
- It can bring together residents, businesses, local groups, landowners and developers to share ideas and build consensus about what needs to be accomplished in the area.
- It can also help to create lasting partnerships both within and outside the community, for example with service providers, public and private organisations, including development companies.
- It will also help locally specific planning issues to be addressed, giving greater detail compared to those within district wide development plans.
- Finally and most importantly it is planning policy written by the local community for that community.

What to watch out for when doing it?

- You need to think carefully about what you want your plan to cover. The more detail and more topics the more evidence you will need to 'prove' your case.
- If you decide to allocate sites – you will need much more detail than 'generic' policies for your area
- It will take time and effort (see attached for likely timeline).
- You can update a plan at anytime – they will not last forever.

What does it cost ?

- This is very difficult to answer, and will depend on the issues you want to address, the size of your area, and the amount of evidence you need to get.

- As a ball park cost - the average total cost of a Neighbourhood Development Plan is estimated to be between £17,000 and £63,000 (these are government estimated figures).
- Cost up to submission of the plan are borne by the parish/community.
- Costs after submission are borne by AVDC.

Where to find out more ?

- See the AVDC website – <http://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/planning-building/planning-policy/what-is-the-vale-of-aylesbury-plan-/neighbourhood-planning/>
- This contain a lot of detailed guidance about the process.

Contact us : Plans Team, AVDC, valeplan@aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk 01296 585439

Stages of Assessment		Key Tasks	*Estimated time
Stage 1 : Getting Started	Parish Council	<p>Recommended Tasks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to AVDC and consider whether a NDP is the most appropriate document for your parish • Get the community on board • Establish a Neighbourhood Development Plan team • Consider financial implications • Produce a programme for developing the Plan • Develop a communication strategy for carry out consultation <p>Legal Requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define the Neighbourhood Area and submit to AVDC • Submit details of the Neighbourhood Development Plan proposal to AVDC • AVDC publish and consult on their website for a minimum of 6 weeks 	2 – 3 months
		<p>Recommended Tasks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather relevant information • Draft the vision and objectives • Check for conformity with district policy (the Vale of Aylesbury Plan) • Consult community on draft visions and objectives <p>Legal Requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Sustainability Appraisal Scoping report 	3 - 4 months
Stage 2 : Developing a Vision & Objectives	Parish Council	<p>Recommended Tasks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop policies • Develop implementation plan • Check for conformity with district policy (the Vale of Aylesbury Plan) • Amend draft plan in response to consultation and finalise <p>Legal Requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult community and stakeholders on draft Plan • Carry out Sustainability Appraisal on draft Plan • Submit draft Plan proposal to AVDC • AVDC publish and consult draft Plan with community and stakeholders for minimum of 6 weeks 	6 – 12 months
		<p>Legal Requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AVDC appoint examiner and submit Plan • Examination • Examiner's report published on AVDC website and decision statement sent to parish council and anyone who has previously made a representation. • AVDC consider examiner's report 	1 – 2 months
Stage 3 : Developing the Plan	Parish Council	<p>Legal Requirement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ AVDC considers changes required ➢ AVDC co-ordinates local referendum 	1 month
		<p>Legal Requirement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ If referendum indicates a majority community support (more than 50% of the turnout which must be at least 21 people), the Neighbourhood Development Plan is adopted by AVDC and has the same weight as other planning policy for the district. 	1 month
Stage 4 : Independent Examination	AVDC		
Stage 5 : Referendum	AVDC		
Stage 6: Adoption	AVDC		