Neighbourhood Plans were introduced by the *Localism Act* (2011) as a right for communities to shape development in their areas. As stated by the Government “if the local planning authority says that an area needs to grow, then Communities cannot use neighbourhood planning to block the building of new homes and businesses; they can, however, use neighbourhood planning to influence the type, design, location and mix of new development.”

Once a Neighbourhood Plan is ‘made’ it will be formally adopted by Aylesbury Vale District Council (AVDC) and form part of the Statutory Development Plan and will form the basis of all planning decisions in the Local Area.

While not all Parishes will want to produce a Neighbourhood Plan, for those that are looking to begin or are in the process of producing one, the points below will provide some guidance as to what a Neighbourhood Plan can deliver. Communities often focus on the amount and location of housing development, but a wide range of important issues besides new housing can be addressed within a Neighbourhood Plan as follows.

1. Neighbourhood Plans can also contain policies which are more specifically related to the needs of the local area than the Local Plan is able to.

2. Policies within the Neighbourhood Plan will form part of the development plan (including the Local Plan we are currently working on when adopted) and are given significant weight in planning decisions.

3. Neighbourhood Plans can include detailed policies about the design of new development, protecting local heritage, protecting community assets, etc., which can help define and enhance the Village/Parish local distinctiveness.
4. Open areas special to the community can be designated as Local Green Spaces to protect them from any development apart from in very exceptional circumstances.

5. A Neighbourhood Plan should positively plan for development. Neighbourhood plans can allocate land for housing, rather than have allocations made in the Local Plan, if the community feels strongly about where the development should go. This offers the community greater control over new development, increasing the neighbourhood plans ability to meet local housing demands. The Draft Aylesbury Vale Local Plan (VALP) was published July 2016 is progressing and housing numbers are still likely to change, in future versions of the plan. However it offers a good starting point to ascertain the housing need as it maybe the case that the necessary development has already been committed and the plan doesn’t need to make allocations unless the community wishes for more development.

6. AVDC still intends to produce a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). When adopted parishes are entitled to 15% of CIL monies where there is no Neighbourhood Plan. However if there is a ‘made’ Neighbourhood Plan the Parish Council is entitled to receive 25% of CIL monies. In the mean time, Parishes can also list important community projects in a Neighbourhood Plan which can benefit from S106 monies until CIL is in place.

7. Neighbourhood Plans give a more focussed context for the Parish Council and residents to comment more effectively on planning applications infrastructure projects and other initiatives i.e. Is this giving us what we are aiming for?

8. If the Parish has already created a Parish/Community Plan you can use this as the basis for a Neighbourhood Plan and it can also be used as part of the evidence base. A lot of the inputs from consultation on the earlier informal plan will also give an indication of the desires of the local community which can also speed up Neighbourhood Plan preparation.

9. Neighbourhood Plans require a lot of community involvement but this educates people about planning and they get more of a understanding of the challenges involved. It can also bring a community together and create a good community spirit.

10. A Neighbourhood Plan can be labour intensive, but by recruiting local people to help you may also find people who wish to help on other parish council activities in the future.

For more details email planningpolicy@aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk
Or visit our neighbourhood planning webpage

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