What planning document is right for your community?

Community Led Plan

Community led plans (CLPs) (formerly known as Parish Plans) are a means by which local communities can set out their own needs and priorities and draw up an action plan to address these. They cover all issues for the parish, not just planning issues, providing an opportunity for everyone in a community to make themselves heard. For example, CLPs can include community views and actions to address the following:

- more open spaces
- more effective public transport
- more affordable housing
- better access to health care
- provision of leisure facilities such as children playgrounds

CLPs do not form a statutory planning document and cannot allocate sites for development. However, they are considered alongside planning applications but cannot be given any formal weight. As such they do not require a rigorous evidence base. They are also likely to be cheaper than a neighbourhood development plan to produce and have certainty they will be adopted.

For further information, contact Community Impact Bucks who offer professional advice and funding for developing Community Led Plans. http://www.communityimpactbucks.org.uk/index.php

Neighbourhood Development Plan

Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs) are a new tier of planning documents introduced by the Localism Act in 2011. They help communities have a greater say in shaping future development. NDPs are primarily aimed at areas where there is likely to be significant future growth, therefore usually aimed at larger settlements. These documents are optional and if you choose not to do a NDP, this does not mean you will be more vulnerable to future development.

The advantages of a NDP compared to a CLP or VDS is you can allocate sites where you would like to see future development e.g. for housing, employment or community facilities.

In general a NDP: allow for more detailed, neighbourhood specific planning policies, which build upon the detail identified in the district wide planning policy document, the Vale of Aylesbury Plan. NDPs cannot be used as a tool for hinder development and they cannot plan for less development than is set out in the Vale of Aylesbury Plan.

Once a NDP is brought into force, it forms a statutory planning document for the parish and is used to assess planning applications along with the Vale of Aylesbury Plan. Because it is a statutory document, a NDP has to conform with the Vale of Aylesbury Plan and national policy.

A NDP must also go through an examination, which requires technical evidence to inform the policy decisions. If found sound a NDP must then go through a referendum, where 50% or more of the votes must be in favour for the NDP in order for it to be brought into force. This evidence is similar to that which must be produced for the Vale of Aylesbury Plan, but on a much smaller scale for the neighbourhood level. As such there are likely to be costs associated with developing a NDP.

The following organisations have been given funding from government to help with producing NDPs:

Community Impact Bucks: www.communityimpactbucks.org.uk (specific to Buckinghamshire)
The Prince’s Foundation: www.princes-foundation.org
Locality: www.locality.org.uk
Planning Aid: www.rti.org.uk/planningaid
Campaign to Protect Rural England: www.cpre.org.uk
Planning Advisory Service: www.pas.gov.uk

Please also see our NDP guidance for more information.

Neighbourhood Development Order

The Localism Act 2011 also proposes that planning permission can be granted for certain types of development within a specified area through a Neighbourhood Development Order (NDO). A NDO can form part of a Neighbourhood Development Plan or it can be a standalone NDO. It can cover the whole neighbourhood area or just part of it. This could be either a particular development or a particular class of development (for example retail or housing). Like a NDP, it will need to be examined and there must be more than 50% of voters in support of the proposal held in a referendum for the NDO to be brought into force. The advantage of this is that it promotes a certain type of development in the area.

Community Right to Build Order

A Community Right to Build Order (CRtB) is a special kind of Neighbourhood Development Order. This allows for a particular piece of land to be developed in a specific way without the need for planning permission. A CRtB order can be produced by a town or parish council or a community organisation, e.g. a town or village society. CRtB organisations must have at least 10 people living in the neighbourhood area from different homes. Like a NDP, it will need to be examined and there must be more than 50% of voters in support of the proposal held in a referendum for the CRtB order to be brought into force. The CRtB order can not be used to expand the size of communities by more than 10 per cent over a 10 year period. This might be appropriate where a certain type of development is wanted by the community in a particular location, for example a new village hall. 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 planning application submitted by a developer.

Rural Exception Schemes

If you would only like to allocate affordable housing, then this process can be achieved through a rural exception scheme policy, without the need for a NDP. Such sites will only be released as an exception to normal housing restraint policies in the rural area where a local need can be evidenced. This process requires less evidence and is less complex, therefore significantly cheaper and quicker than compared to producing a NDP. Please contact Jean Fox at Community Impact Bucks for further details.

Village Design Statement

Village Design Statements (VDSs) are intended to provide an assessment of village character and local distinctiveness as valued by local people. They are prepared by the local community, provide an illustrated record of local distinctiveness and make recommendations to guide the design of future development.

Village Design Statements are intended to complement the existing District Design Guides by providing more detailed information with a strong local context. Therefore a VDS would be an appropriate document to develop if the main concern within the parish is to control the design of future development.

A VDS containing relevant planning information would be regarded as a material planning consideration to be taken into account when considering a planning application. Generally speaking, documents prepared with the Council’s input and subject to public consultation, tend to have more weight as material considerations.

What happens if your community choose not to develop one of these community planning documents?

If you choose not to develop parish level planning documents, this does not mean you will be more vulnerable to future development. The district wide planning policy document, the Vale of Aylesbury Plan (VAP), will provide planning policies to shape development (as the current 2004 Aylesbury Vale District Local Plans does). These policies will be strategic in nature and will not be specific to a parish, instead there will be generic policies for settlements which are of a similar size and character. This will be used for determining planning applications. The policies in the VAP are likely to be similar to the current policies in AVDUP, for example: for the development management policy in small, rural villages, it is likely to be only small scale rounding off and infilling development, designed to be in keeping with its surroundings.

In developing the Vale of Aylesbury Plan, there are several stages of public consultation where you can have your say. So far there have been several consultations, one aimed at town and parish councils and one district wide consultation looking at future growth figures and broad locations of development. Early next year we will be consulting on development management policies for the Vale of Aylesbury providing an opportunity for you to influence these development management policies. All town and parish councils will be notified in due course of future consultations.