

## **ACTION NOTES**

<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>Buckingham Local Area Forum</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>31 March 2011 7.00 pm to 9.10 pm</b>
<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>Small Hall, Buckingham Community Centre, Cornwalls Meadow, MK18 1RP</b>

<b>Present:</b>	Hedley Cadd (Buckinghamshire County Council), Ivy Cakebread (Stowe Parish Council), Terry Cavender (Akeley Parish Council), John Chilver (Aylesbury Vale District Council), Geoff Culverhouse (Nash Parish Council), Patrick Fealey (Gawcott with Lenborough), Janet Howatson (Westbury Parish Council), Terry Humber (East Claydon Parish Council), Derrick Isham (Aylesbury Vale District Council) (Vice-Chairman), Will Kellett (Charndon Parish Council), Roger Landells (Twyford Parish Council), Pearl Lewis (Aylesbury Vale District Council), Alex Matthews (Thornton Parish Council), Jackie Phipps (Aylesbury Vale District Council), David Polhill (Buckinghamshire County Council) (Chairman), David Richards (Turweston Parish Council), John Riches (Middle Claydon Parish Council), Mike Smith (Buckingham Town Council) and Sir Beville Stanier (Aylesbury Vale District Council)
<b>In Attendance:</b>	Amanda Brooke-Webb, Ann Cobban, Ann-Marie Davies, Simon Dudley, Inspector Emma Garside, Mark Grindall, Ann Kiceluk and Liz Wheaton
<b>Apologies:</b>	Mrs J Beckett, Nick Osgerby, Lady Scott, John White and Warren Whyte

Item	ISSUES RAISED
<b>1</b>	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP</b>  Apologies as above. There were no changes in membership.
<b>2</b>	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>  There were no declarations of interest.
<b>3</b>	<b>ACTION NOTES</b>  The action notes of the meeting held on Thursday 9 December 2010 were agreed as a correct record.
<b>4</b>	<b>CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE</b>  The Chairman congratulated and thanked Buckingham Town Council for the work it had done to save the local youth centre. He went on to say that it is a wonderful example of communities working together for the good of local people.  A Member paid particular thanks to John Barnett, Chairman of the Management Committee, who was instrumental to its success.
<b>5</b>	<b>QUESTION TIME</b>  There were no written questions, although the Chairman mentioned the changes in taxation relating to clerks' pay which is about to be implemented. Mark Grindall, Localities Manager, went on to say that the County Council's legal team are looking into this issue as a number of parishes are concerned. Should there be any further information, this will be circulated to Members.

	<p>A Member expressed concern over the costs associated with the software needed to administer the payroll for the clerks which is estimated at £700.</p> <p>A Member commented that some voluntary organisations are offering to undertake the administration for free.</p>
<p><b>6</b></p>	<p><b>PETITIONS</b></p> <p>There were no petitions.</p>
<p><b>7</b></p>	<p><b>AVDC UPDATE</b></p> <p>Ann Kiceluk, Lead Officer from AVDC, took Members through the following key issues affecting the area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buckingham Open Day</li> <li>• Buckingham Marketing Plan</li> <li>• Final AVDC budget for 2011/2012</li> <li>• The Vale of Aylesbury Plan.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Open Day in Buckingham</u></b></p> <p>In early February, AVDC held an open day at the Customer Service Centre. Visitors were able to meet councillors and AVDC staff to ask questions about services and to feedback on their views. Around 60-70 visitors attended the open day and following this success, there are plans to hold another one later in the year.</p> <p><b><u>Marketing Plan</u></b></p> <p>In 2010/2011, AVDC contributed £13,500 towards the development of a brand for Buckingham and marketing plan. Working with the Trader’s Association and other partners, this work has been going exceptionally well and plans are being developed for a launch in the next few months.</p> <p>In 2011/2012, more resources are required – both manpower and money – to help with the launch and to support the delivery of the marketing plan. AVDC is contributing a further £10k towards this. A proportion of the money will be used to fund a marketing assistant, Emma Eyles, who will spend one day a week on this work.</p> <p><b><u>Budget</u></b></p> <p>AVDC has set a zero per cent rise in its council tax for 2011/12. This means that local taxpayers will not face any increase on the average £2.52 a week they pay for all the services provided by AVDC. Ann explained that the Council has identified £1.8 million in savings across its services with key savings being made through re-structuring some services and changes to the structure of the authority’s senior management team (£650,000) and a further £300,000 by making changes to working practices in the refuse and recycling service.</p> <p>AVDC will also be using £445,000 from the authority’s financial reserves to help reduce the budget deficit, although this cannot be repeated year on year. It is very difficult for Councils to make up the shortfall. Ann went on to say that some of AVDC’s money was lost in the Icelandic Bank crisis. The results of the hearing into this matter will be known soon and the decision will be appealed if it is not in favour of the Authority.</p>

**The Vale of Aylesbury Plan**

In December, AVDC wrote to all parish and town councils requesting their opinion of their communities “feelings” to development and how they would wish to work with AVDC in the future.

A full copy of the update is attached for Members.

A Member commented that they had had to increase their parish precept due to a 1.8% increase in Council Tax as a result of the inclusion of more banded properties.

**8 THAMES VALLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICE UPDATE**

The Chairman welcomed Inspector Emma Garside. She started by explaining that recently there have been some scaremongering articles appearing in the media in relation to cuts to Police officer numbers and increases in crime. She asked Members to consider such articles in a balanced way when discussing them with their areas.

Thames Valley Police Authority agreed the policing budget for 2011/12 on 18 February. The net annual budget has been set at £383.146 million. Following confirmation this month of next year’s level of Government grant funding, Thames Valley Police Authority’s grant allocation has been reduced by 3.7% for 2011/12, and is anticipated to fall by 11.75% in total over the next four years. In response to the planned reduction in Government funding until 2014/15, savings in the region of £50 million will need to be made over the next four years. The majority of these savings will be delivered through collaboration projects, the Local Policing Model re-structure and a programme of reviews into what we do, and how we do it.

As part of the re-structuring process, a new matrix system, which looks at population density, has been applied across the Thames Valley area and this has resulted in 15 new posts being created in Aylesbury Vale. Inspector Garside explained that the new officers will be phased in over the next 12 months and will be recruited into response officer roles, neighbourhood roles and investigative roles. Inspector Garside went on to say that she is looking to increase the number of special constables in the area.

Thames Valley Police Authority also agreed the Policing Strategy for 2011/14 on 18 February. The Strategy was developed in response to feedback from consultations and Government directives. Inspector Garside explained that there are six objectives, which are:

- To cut crimes that are of most concern to the Community;
- To increase the visible presence of the Police;
- To protect our Communities from the most serious harm;
- To improve communication with the public in order to build trust and confidence within our Communities;
- To tackle bureaucracy and develop the professional skills of all staff;
- To reduce costs and protect the front line.

Inspector Garside reminded Members that the Winslow police office is now open and the front desk will soon be manned by volunteers who are in the process of receiving their training.

Inspector Garside went on to say that a new website with a crime mapping device was launched at the beginning of February. There have been a few problems with getting onto the site but it is a useful way to track crime figures on a month-by-month basis. Inspector Garside said that if any parishes would like specific data about their area, then her officers would be willing to attend parish meetings.

There has been a 25% reduction in rural crime in Buckingham Town and Maids Moreton which is a significant decrease. There are a few isolated reports but crime is decreasing in the area.

There has been a spate of handbag dippings and the offenders, posing as the victim's bank, have been contacting victims asking for the PIN number of their credit cards. Members of the public should be aware that banks do not request PIN numbers from their customers. Arrests are imminent.

There has been an incident in Steeple Claydon whereby a individual said they were a employee from British Gas but this was not legitimate. Members of the public should be mindful of bogus callers and report them if they receive any.

Anti-Social Behaviour remains a priority for the area and police have been patrolling vulnerable areas such as parks. Operations into addressing speeding still continue with various locations being targeted.

There has been excellent engagement between the police and the youth football team.

Thames Valley Police are launching 'Police Tractor', a new vehicle to help reduce agricultural crime. A John Deere tractor, which has the same colours and markings as a police car will be taken to major rural events in the Thames Valley in a bid to reduce crime. The tractor will be fitted with various security devices. A DVD has also been produced – free copies are available to parishes. The tractor will be present at the Buckingham Country show on 4 June 2011.

During discussion, Members asked the following.

A Member referred to the Thames Valley Police community messaging service and asked Inspector Garside if she was aware of incidents involving fake telephone calls from British Telecom. Inspector Garside explained that one of the benefits of the messaging service was to get important messages, such as this, out into the local community.

A Member asked where the extra staff will be placed. Inspector Garside advised that 5 members of staff will be assigned to investigative roles and 10 will be police officers. Extra officers would not be assigned to the Buckingham area.

A Member thanked Inspector Garside for the very good update and asked where the DVD is available from. Inspector Garside advised that the DVD is being launched on 14 April.

A Member advised that Superintendent Richard List, Local Police Area Commander Aylesbury Vale, is leaving Thames Valley Police. Thanks were given to Superintendent List as he was instrumental in getting Inspector Garside in post. Inspector Garside explained that Superintendent George Wrigley would be replacing Inspector List from the first week of April.

An officer made reference to a recent assault on a family member and added his personal thanks to Inspector Garside and her officers for their rapid handling of the situation.

A Member asked if there had been any success with the local traveller site. Inspector Garside advised that there had been some success in terms of engaging with people. Thames Valley Police are working hard with AVDC to reduce fly-tipping and more activity is planned for April time.

The Chairman thanked Inspector Garside for her very useful update.

**9 LOCALITIES DELEGATED BUDGET**

Mark Grindall, Locality Manager, explained that there has been a substantial increase in the devolved budgets for 2011/12 (an increase of 65%). Mark went on to say that the PAYP and Early Years Grant for 2011/12 have both been withdrawn.

	<p>With regards to the Local Priorities Budget, 7 schemes totalling £20,000 were funded during 2010/11.</p> <p>Mark explained that the general principles for the management and decision-making of Devolved Budgets were as follows;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All funding must be spent in line with the specific criteria associated with the budget.</li> <li>• The funding must be spent within the financial year for which it is allocated.</li> <li>• For 2011/12, in consultation with the LAF Chairman, each Head of Service concerned will take a view in November 2011 on the likelihood of unspent monies being used that year. If there is a budget that is unlikely to be spent that year, it will revert back to the service concerned for allocation to activities that will benefit the area during 2011/12.</li> <li>• As in 2010/11, in terms of formal decision-making, the LAFs will be advising the relevant Head of Service on how to spend the devolved budget who will then implement that advice.</li> <li>• To allow for the occasional unforeseen opportunity that required a swift decision, funding may be agreed in-between LAF meetings in consultation with the Local Area Forum Chairman and the Head of Service.</li> </ul> <p>The Local Priorities budget is to be used to commission activities to meet the local priorities identified in the Buckingham Local Area Plan.</p> <p>The Chairman mentioned that £22,500 has been spent to benefit young people in the area.</p> <p>A Member asked why the salt bin in Nelson Street was funded by the local priorities budget rather than the TfB delegated budget. Mark explained that a salt bin would not normally be funded from this budget but this was an exceptional case which needed resolving at short notice and there were specific issues around safety which were a local priority.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked Mark for his update.</p>
<p><b>10</b></p>	<p><b>LOCAL AREA PLANNING - PRIORITY SETTING 2011/12</b></p> <p>Mark Grindall started by informing Members that the plan for 2011/12 has been updated. Below is a link to the plan which is available via the website.</p> <p><a href="http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/assets/content/bcc/docs/our_communities/Buckingham_localareaplan.pdf">http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/assets/content/bcc/docs/our_communities/Buckingham_localareaplan.pdf</a></p> <p>Mark explained that there are around 23 priorities in the Buckingham area, some of which the LAF are unable to progress as they are more strategic in nature. A simple document will be sent out in the next few weeks asking for the priorities to be ranked. Once responses have been received, the top 5-6 priorities will be identified and how they should be addressed. Mark said that there will be a workshop to revisit the priorities before the end of May. Further details to follow.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Action: Mark Grindall</b></p>
<p><b>11</b></p>	<p><b>TRANSPORTATION DELEGATED BUDGET 2011/12</b></p> <p>Ann-Marie Davies, Transport Localities Team Leader, started by explaining that the team are currently going through a re-structuring process and that a new Local Area Technician for the area will be announced soon. Ann-Marie reported that she will be responsible for managing more people and a larger area.</p> <p>There are two projects which are still outstanding from the 2010/11 delegated budget. They are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a VAS on the A413 at both the southern and northern entrances to Akeley village;</li> </ul>

- a VAS on the A422 opposite the Walnuts in Westbury.

There has been a substantial increase in the transportation delegated budget for 2011/12. The allocation for the Buckingham LAF area is £53,206.54. Members then considered the schemes which have been submitted for 2011/12.

During discussion, the following points were made.

The Member for Akeley Parish Council reported that the bid submitted to clear the gullies in Akeley can now be removed as the work has already been undertaken.

A Member commented that the scheme to install a footpath along the main road to the High Street refers to Dadford High Street and not Stowe.

A Member asked for an update on the roadside repairs in Botolph Claydon. Simon Dudley responded by saying that this is being looked at by the Asset Management Bureau.

A Member asked whether they still needed to apply for a road closure order around the church. The Chairman explained that a meeting has been set up with the rector of the church and other relevant parties to discuss the options available.

A Member expressed concern about the car parking by the school at Bourton Meadow. There are now 600 pupils at the school and when the layby was first installed, there were 300 pupils. The Chairman acknowledged that it is an issue which is being looked into. Simon Dudley confirmed that a bid application has been submitted to create a larger layby on Burleigh Piece next to Bourton Meadow School.

The Chairman read out the following options for Members to consider.

1. To proceed with the identified schemes and identify additional schemes that fit in with the local priorities;
2. To proceed with the identified schemes but increase the size of the allocation to those schemes which will deliver additional quantity of that scheme;
3. To remove the schemes that have already been identified and identify alternative schemes that may not have been considered due to the cost of providing those schemes.

**Members AGREED unanimously to proceed with option 1.**

Simon Dudley agreed to attend the next meeting with further information on the schemes and the costs associated with them. He said that any new schemes need to be submitted by Monday 2 May 2011.

### **Winter Maintenance**

Simon then went on to provide Members with an update on the Winter Maintenance plan for 2011/12. He said that December 2010 was the worst period of snow and his team received 10,000 more calls than usual over this time. He said a number of issues were raised following this, including the use of ploughs belonging to the farmers and the concerns that people had about clearing the snow themselves and protecting their own liability should anything happen to others.

Simon said that 30 farmers had offered their help. TfB used 7 contractors to get them through the busy period. In the Summer, TfB will be undertaking an extensive review of the Winter Maintenance programme, including the salt routes, how the footpaths are to be treated and how the devolved budgets are to be used.

The Chairman and Simon Dudley thanked Buckingham Town Council for their work and support during the snow time.

### **DoT's snow code**

Simon went on to say that the Department of Transport has produced a snow code and he said that if any parish or town councils would like to receive copies of this, then they should contact either Ann-Marie Davies or Simon. He advised Members that the use of hot water to melt the snow is not advisable as it just freezes over and makes it hazardous.

### **Twyford Bridge**

Simon read out a statement regarding the state of the bridge. Bucks County Council are looking into whether the railway still owns the bridge and Simon is meeting the manager shortly to discuss this.

A Member commented that there is a leaking water main in the area and asked whether the Water Company may be partly responsible for the collapse of the bridge. If so, would the company be asked to contribute towards the repair costs. Simon explained that if it does transpire that the leaking water has contributed to the collapse of the bridge, then the Water Company would have to pay some of the costs.

A Member asked whether the proposed high speed 2 rail link would affect whether the bridge repair takes place or not. Simon Dudley explained that HS2 has no influence over the project. The bridge structure needs to be removed and the area re-constructed.

### **Local Area Technician**

Simon reported that Ken Horne will be leaving his post in May/June time and Simon is trying to work through the outstanding issues in the area. He asked Members to email him with reminders over the next few weeks.

**Action: Members**

### **Capital Programme**

The capital programme is made up of £27 million from Government funding and £4 million from Bucks County Council. The Transport for Buckinghamshire budget is £13.8 million which is used by the Asset Management team to fund major capital projects. The revenue budget has decreased by 16%.

### **Re-surfacing work**

Simon reported that work to re-surface the Tingewick by-pass will commence next week at a cost of around £350,000. It will be an around the clock project lasting 5 days. He warned of traffic disruption around the area and there is no diversion but it is essential to keep the traffic flowing and to do the work.

Work on the A413 near to the Bull and Butcher pub will commence on 2 May and 9 May.

A Member mentioned that the mixture used to mend potholes has been complained about to the European Union. The Member asked whether TfB was aware of this and, if so, were they looking into this further. Simon explained that the pothole repairs are better this year and the materials used to mend them are constantly monitored and the same materials are used across the Country.

The Chairman thanked Simon and Ann-Marie for their updates.

<p><b>12</b></p>	<p><b>RURAL BROADBAND IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE</b></p> <p>Terry Cavender provided Members with an update and explained that lobbying work still continues. A funding application was submitted to BDUK which, unfortunately, was unsuccessful. Terry said that he is looking at accessing some European money and has a meeting set-up soon to discuss this further. The aim is to deliver broadband to the pink areas identified on the maps which were circulated to Members prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Terry asked Members to email him if they required further information on this project.</p>
<p><b>13</b></p>	<p><b>GP-LED COMMISSIONING</b></p> <p>Amanda Brooke-Webb, Lead Area Officer from Bucks CC, provided Members with an update on this new initiative which comes into force in 2013. She started by saying that the existing Strategic Health Authorities and PCTs would be abolished under the new proposal and would be replaced by GP collaboratives. She said that three such collaboratives are already in existence. Buckinghamshire has been heavily involved in shaping how it will work and is seen as an early implementer.</p> <p>Amanda went on to say that there is not very much information available via the Strategic Health Authority at the moment but the LAF will be kept informed on progress.</p> <p>A Member asked whether more information could be made available on how this new initiative will support the Community Hospital. The Member went on to suggest that a representative from the newly formed collaborative should be invited to attend a future LAF meeting.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked Amanda for her update.</p>
<p><b>14</b></p>	<p><b>FLOOD SUB-GROUP UPDATE</b></p> <p>Terry Cavender reported to Members on a very successful meeting which took place between Buckingham Town Council, Aylesbury Vale District Council and Anglian Water, who have undertaken extensive research into the flooding issues around the area. Six interventions have been suggested and modelling work is being undertaken at the moment. AVDC have endorsed the recommendation. The project is estimated to cost £50,000 of which Anglian Water has committed £15-20,000 for the design work and Buckingham Town Council and AVDC have both committed £5,000 each. A bid application will be made to TfB for the remaining £10,000.</p> <p>The Chairman praised everyone involved and said it was an excellent example of joined-up working.</p>
<p><b>15</b></p>	<p><b>OPEN FORUM</b></p> <p>During open forum, Members asked the following questions.</p> <p>A Member asked for an update on when the updated inspection manual will be made available via the website. The Chairman said that he would speak to Val Letheren, Cabinet Member for Transportation, to find out more.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Action: Chairman</b></p> <p>Terry Cavender provided Members with information on the Help Scheme which the BBC has set up through an agreement with the Government to make sure that those who need to most benefit from practical support and advice during the digital switchover process. Community Impact Bucks are looking for volunteers to assist with this.</p>



If anyone is interested, they should contact Bridget Wythe at Community Impact Bucks on 0845 3890389. Information about the Community Volunteer role and a draft advert for volunteers were circulated.

A Member said that John Bercow MP will be visiting Turweston on Saturday 2 April to discuss HS2. The meeting will take place at 2.30pm at St Mary's Church. Simon Dudley reiterated the point that the proposals for HS2 have no influence over which schemes are approved from the delegated budget.

[The Chairman leaves the room whilst Energy from Waste is discussed]. Derrick Isham, Vice-Chairman, took over at this point.

A Member started a discussion about EfW by saying that they had attended a meeting where Peter Darvas, from Savi, spoke about the health risks which was very enlightening. There have been 23 incidents of health risk reported in the Defra report and there are three further reports showing more evidence. 26,000 people have signed a petition and 56 letters have been received objecting to the EfW site. The Member urged other Members to put forward their objections which should be made in writing to John Bercow MP. Other Members agreed that Peter Darvas's presentation was well worth listening to.

The consultation deadline of 8 April has now been extended until the Autumn time. The following statement was received from the planning officers at Bucks County Council.

"Although the statutory period for comments on the Calvert EfW planning application ends on Friday 8th April, we will continue to accept representations during the spring and summer months. This is because the application will not fall to be determined by the County Council's Development Control Committee until the autumn at the earliest. However, if representations are likely to raise detailed technical issues, requiring in-depth investigation on our part, we would still prefer these to be submitted by the middle of the year if at all possible so that we have good time to consider them before preparing our advice and recommendations to the Committee."

Mark Grindall, Localities Manager, said that concerns have been raised at other LAF meetings and he suggested that Members email their questions to him and he will endeavour to get responses from the relevant officers. If Members wanted to hold a special meeting, this would have to take place after the District Council elections in May and there would need to be sufficient interest. He also advised Members to sign up for email alerts so that they can keep abreast of the developments. Below is a link to the sign up page on Bucks County Council's website.

<http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/moderngov/mgRegisterKeywordInterest.asp?bcr=1>

**16 INFORMATION ITEMS**

Members were asked to note the reports on the following:

- HS2
- Energy from Waste
- The BBC's Switchover Help Scheme.

**17 DATE OF NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS**

The next meeting is due to take place on Thursday 30 June 2011. Venue to be confirmed.

**Future dates:**

Thursday 29 September  
Thursday 15 December.



## AVDC Local Area Forum Briefing Update – March 2011

Key areas included in this update:

- Buckingham Open Day
- Buckingham Marketing Plan
- Final AVDC budget for 2011/2012
- The Vale of Aylesbury Plan
- Elections 5 May 2011

### 1. Buckingham Open Day

In early February, AVDC held an open day at the Customer Service Centre. Visitors were able to meet councillors and AVDC staff to ask questions about our services and feedback their views. We had between 60-70 visitors who tended to stay on average for half an hour.

Following the success of the first open day, there are plans to hold another one later in the year.

### 2. Buckingham Marketing Plan

In 2010/2011, AVDC contributed £13,500 towards the development of a brand for Buckingham and marketing plan. Working with the Traders' Association and other partners, this work has been going exceptionally well and plans are being developed for a launch in the next few months.

In 2011/2012, more resources are required - both manpower and money - to help with the launch and support the delivery of the marketing plan. AVDC is contributing a further £10k towards this. A proportion of the money will be used to fund a marketing assistant, Emma Eyles, who will spend one day a week on this work. Emma will largely be based in Buckingham.

### 3. Budget

Aylesbury Vale District Council has set a zero per cent rise in its council tax for 2011/2012. This means that local taxpayers will not face any increase on the average £2.52 a week they pay for all the services provided by AVDC.

Local authorities that accept the challenge of freezing council tax are eligible for a government grant equivalent to a 2.5 per cent increase in their element of the levy.

The government's grant settlement figures, issued to AVDC last December, were much worse than expected and mean a reduction in government funding of £2.6 million (22 per cent) for the next financial year with a further cut of £1.2 million (13

per cent) the following year. Overall, the council faces an 8.4 per cent reduction in its total resources, the largest of any authority in Buckinghamshire.

Due to the severe financial constraints imposed on all local authorities by the government's austerity measures, some difficult decisions have had to be made. But the council, which faces having to make even tougher decisions for the next three years, has done everything in its power to minimise the impact of the budget on frontline services.

To balance its books for the forthcoming financial year the council has identified around £1.8 million in savings across its services. Key savings include £650,000 made through restructuring some services and changes to the structure of the authority's senior management team and a further £300,000 by making changes to working practices in the refuse and recycling service.

AVDC will also be using £445,000 from the authority's financial reserves to help reduce the budget deficit.

It's anticipated that further savings of £2.6 million will need to be made by 2012/13 alone. The council's priority is to continue to look for further efficiencies and find new ways of generating income.

#### **4. The Vale of Aylesbury Plan**

At the last LAF meetings we highlighted the new Vale of Aylesbury Plan (the new planning policy document for the district). In December, we wrote to all parish and town councils to request your opinion of their communities 'feelings' to development and how they would wish to work with AVDC in the future. Around a third of councils have come back and thank you if you are one of them. If you have yet to respond if you could do so as soon as you can or tell us when you can that will help us in getting a 'feel' for the local communities thoughts, and also help us plan our resources.

The Localism Bill was published in December last year, and we have recently issued a newsletter giving an update on the changes to planning that are likely (available on our Vale of Aylesbury Plan web pages). One of the key changes is the introduction of Neighbourhood Plans which means it will be possible (within some limitations) to set the parishes own planning policy. This is a radical shift in the way planning policy is developed, and emphasises the importance of coming back to us on your communities initial reaction. Once you do come back to us, we will be able to work with you and help you move forward with these issues if you wish.

Technical work is continuing on developing the Districts own employment and housing targets, which are also one of the changes to the planning system. The top down regional process will go once the Localism Bill is in place, and we will have to

set our own figures. It's anticipated that this work will continue until around the autumn.

For more information please contact Andy Barton, Forward Plans Manager on 01296

## **5. Elections 2011**

Elections are being held for all 59 District Council seats and for 652 seats on the 85 Parish Councils within the Vale which includes the new parish council for Buckingham Park. In addition, a referendum will be held on the same day on changing the way MPs are elected to the House of Commons – the “alternative vote” system versus the current ‘first past the post’.

The elections will take place on Thursday 5 May 2011 with polling taking place between 7.00am and 10.00pm.

The key dates in the election process are:

Publication of Notice of Election	21 March
Close of nominations	4 April (Noon)
Publication of Statement of Persons nominated	6 April (Noon)
Last day to register to vote or apply for a postal/proxy vote	14 April

Parish clerks have already been asked to consider how awareness of the elections can be raised locally such as articles in newsletters, mention at meetings, word of mouth, or items on websites.

The formal election process is handled by the elections team at AVDC. They will supply the various notices for display on Parish notice boards and also provide clerks with nomination packs, which may be handed to those wishing to stand for election.

It is imperative that candidates complete nomination papers fully and accurately and submit them so that they are received by the deadline. No discretion or latitude exists in law to allow for any extension of time. Early submission is recommended to allow time for a revised set to be completed if there are any errors.

Any publicity material candidates circulate must bear an imprint detailing who has printed, promoted and published the item. Further guidance will be included with nomination packs.