

Session 9, Matter 7- The Strategy, Housing Growth Areas and Safeguarded Land for Washington

I fully support the submission by Springwell Village Residents Association and would like to add the following personal comments:-

2. Identification of Sites

2.1 Do the green Belt assessments support the HGAs and areas of safeguarded land in Washington and demonstrate exceptional circumstances for the removal of land from the Green Belt?

No evidence of exceptional circumstances. Re sites HGA 1, 2 and 3 - it would appear that, although unsuitable for development, these sites have been seen as easy options for inclusion in the CSDP as land owners/ developers were already in place, had put their land forward and are keen to proceed. It is a matter of grave concern that the Council is willing to unnecessarily delete these sites, especially at a time when the environment and climate change are receiving so much national and global awareness.

3. HGA1- South West Springwell

3.1 Is the Council satisfied that the landscape, heritage, biodiversity, access, transport, drainage and other constraints are capable of being mitigated so that development of the site would be acceptable?

The Council has not given due consideration to the significance of Bowes Railway, a Scheduled Ancient Monument, which is adjacent to site HGA1 and an important part of North East heritage. This railway (now a museum) was built by George Stephenson in 1826 and is unique in that it is the only operational preserved standard gauge cable railway system in the World. It also has connections to the Royal Family through HM Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother (formerly Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon). Bowes Railway should be viewed as an asset to Sunderland and its setting protected at all costs.

Please note that CSDP Policy BH9.1 actually states:

“development which adversely affects the archaeological interest or setting of a Scheduled Ancient Monument (or non designated heritage asset of equivalent significance) will be refused planning permission unless exceptional circumstances exist that satisfy the requirements of the NPPF”.

Little regard has been paid to the wildlife corridor and green infrastructure of this area and its close proximity to Springwell Ponds LWS

The Council has clarified that the site promoter owns neighbouring land to facilitate access routes.

The neighbouring land the site promoter owns is also Green Belt land and any use here would be further encroachment.