

# Land East of Washington - Washington Meadows

## Supplementary Planning Document Scoping Report

December 2020





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# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Sunderland City Council is currently in the process of preparing its Local Plan which consists of three parts:
- The Core Strategy and Development Plan (CSDP) adopted in 2020;
  - The Allocation and Designations Plan (A&D Plan); and
  - International Advanced Manufacturing Park Area Action Plan (IAMP AAP) adopted in 2017.
- 1.2 The Draft A&D Plan, currently being consulted upon alongside this Scoping Report, identifies in Policy SP12, North East Washington (Figure 1) as an area for regeneration and new development. The policy states that the Council, working with its partners, will:
- a) create a new sustainable residential community at Land East of Washington (hereafter referred to as Washington Meadows);
  - b) work to secure regeneration and renewal at Sulgrave; and
  - c) work toward re-opening the Leamside Line.
- 1.3 Policy SS9 of the Draft A&D Plan allocates Washington Meadows as a sustainable urban extension to Washington. The site was previously safeguarded by the CSDP.
- 1.4 To ensure Washington Meadows meets its potential and realises the council's and community's aspirations, a comprehensive approach to its development is necessary to ensure that the new housing and infrastructure are delivered in a timely manner.
- 1.5 Sunderland City Council intends to produce and formally adopt a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to guide the development of Land East of Washington (Washington Meadows) (hereafter referred to as Washington Meadows in this draft Scoping Report). This scoping report acts as an opening consultation paper to discuss the relevant issues, themes and potential format. It will form the initial stage of the process towards developing the SPD.

## Purpose of this SPD

- 1.6 The purpose of an SPD is to expand policy or provide further detail and support of policies in a Development Plan. An SPD does not have Development Plan status, but it can be accorded significant weight as a material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications. The provisions of an SPD cannot therefore be regarded as prescriptive, but it can provide a tool in the interpretation and application of policy. In order to prepare an SPD, justified evidence is required, followed by consultation and other council procedural matters.
- 1.7 This SPD gives detailed advice on how policies SP12 and SP9 will be applied. The purpose of the SPD is to:
- detail the Council's visions and aspirations for Washington Meadows;
  - facilitate the delivery of Washington Meadows to ensure that the site is delivered in a comprehensive and coordinated manner; and
  - provide a basis for informed and transparent decision making on planning applications.
- 1.8 The purpose of this scoping report is to engage stakeholders and seek views on the proposed SPD. The Council would welcome any comments on the scope of the SPD.

## Preparing the SPD

- 1.9 This Washington Meadows Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) Scoping Report has been prepared in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

## Sustainability Assessment

- 1.10 SPDs do not require the preparation of a Sustainability Appraisal (SA). Consequently, a SA has not been prepared. A SA has been prepared for the A&D Plan which should be considered alongside this SPD.

## **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening**

- 1.11 As part of the Scoping Report consultation a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening will be undertaken to determine if a SEA is required. A SEA has been prepared for the A&D Plan.

## **Equalities Impact Assessment and Habitat Regulation Assessment**

- 1.12 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been prepared. Washington Meadows is not subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessments as it is outside of the 6km boundary from the coast.

## **Public engagement**

- 1.13 The SPD will be subject to eight weeks of formal public consultation in line with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement and any comments received during that time will be analysed and incorporated into the next version where appropriate. Consultation will commence on 18 December 2020 until 12 February 2021.

## **Structure of the SPD Scoping Report**

- 1.14 This scoping report is structured as follows:
- Policy Context - provides a summary of relevant policies at a national and local level.
  - Washington Meadows - Provides further context on Washington Meadows, the constraints and opportunities of the area.
  - Scope of the SPD - covers further details on the subject matter of the SPD including evidence base and key strategic issues.
  - Timescales and Next Steps.

## 2. Policy Context

### National Policy (National Planning Policy Framework)

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019) provides the Government’s National Planning Policy for England.
- 2.2 At paragraph 11, the NPPF sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development. This requires Local Planning Authorities (LPAs), via local plans, to seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area. As part of this, the NPPF gives encouragement for the allocation of larger sites. At paragraph 72, the NPPF identifies that the supply of a large number of new homes can often be best achieved through planning for larger scale development such as new settlements or within existing villages and towns (such as Washington) provided that they are well located and designed and supported by the necessary infrastructure and facilities. Working with the support of their communities and with other authorities if appropriate, strategic policy making authorities should identify suitable locations for such development where this can help to meet identify needs in a sustainable way. In doing so they should:
- a) consider the opportunities presented by existing or planned investment in infrastructure, the area’s economic potential and the scope for net environmental gains;
  - b) ensure that their size and location will support a sustainable community, with sufficient access to services and employment opportunities within the development itself (without expecting an unrealistic level of self-containment) or in larger towns to which there are good access;
  - c) set clear expectations for the quality of the development and how this can be maintained (such as by following garden city principles) and ensure that a variety of homes, to meet the needs of different groups in the community, will be provided;

- d) make a realistic assessment of likely rates of delivery, given the lead in times for large scale sites and identify opportunities for supporting rapid implementation (such as through joint ventures or locally led development corporations); and
- e) Consider whether it is appropriate to establish Green Belt around or adjoining new developments of significant size.

### Local Plan - Core Strategy and Development Plan

- 2.3 The CSDP was adopted in January 2020. Washington Meadows was safeguarded as part of CSDP Policy SS3 Safeguarded Land.

#### Core Strategy and Development Plan (CSDP) Policy SS3: Safeguarded Land

Land East of Washington has been removed from the Green Belt and designated as Safeguarded Land.

Planning Permission for the development of Safeguarded Land will not be granted except where the development is temporary or would otherwise not prejudice the ability of the site to be developed in longer term.

- 2.4 The CSDP background text (paragraph 4.52) sets out that, through a plan review, the reassessment of Safeguarded Land will involve the determination as to whether there are prevailing circumstances for releasing some or all the land for development or whether it should be maintained as safeguarded land.
- 2.5 Paragraph 4.53 of the CSDP sets out that the Land East of Washington could accommodate a new sustainable community in the long term but would require a comprehensive approach to ensure that the infrastructure required to make the site sustainable is delivered. Also, it provides, that the Council would give consideration as to whether an early release of the safeguarded land is justified through the emerging Allocations & Designations Plan.

## Draft Allocations and Designations Plan

2.6 The Draft Allocations and Designations (A&D) Plan sets out detailed site allocations and land use designations for the city. The Draft A&D Plan refers to Washington Meadows in Policy SP12 and SS9.

### Policy SP12: Allocations and Designations Development Strategy

1. To support the overall development strategy set out in the CSDP, this plan:
  - i. allocates 58 sites for residential development including a strategic allocation at Riverside Sunderland (Policy SS8);
  - ii. focuses regeneration and new development at North East Washington. To achieve this:
    - the council and its partners will work to secure regeneration and renewal at Sulgrave;
    - a strategic site at Washington Meadows is allocated to create a new sustainable residential community; and
    - the council working with its partners will work to re-open the Leamside Line.
  - iii. allocates the former Houghton Colliery site as a development opportunity and extension to Houghton Town Centre;
  - iv. designates heritage assets;
  - v. protects the natural environment by designating areas for protection and enhancement;
  - vi. identifies land suitable for wind energy development to support a move towards a low carbon future;
  - vii. safeguards land for the future expansion of the Metro network, including potential park and ride locations; and
  - viii. safeguards Eppleton Quarry to ensure a steady supply of minerals throughout the plan period.

### Policy SS9: Washington Meadows

Washington Meadows is allocated as an urban extension to Washington. Development of this new sustainable community should:

- provide a mix of housing types with a focus on larger detached dwellings;
- address impacts and make provision or contributions towards education provision and healthcare where justified and necessary;
- enhance access to local facilities and services, where appropriate;
- deliver 1,500 homes<sup>1</sup>;
- provide 15% affordable homes;
- create a new defensible Green Belt boundary to the north of the site;
- maintain wildlife and green infrastructure corridors, limit any impact on the area's landscape character and provide suitable ecological mitigation where appropriate;
- provide greenspace/green infrastructure within the site;
- include vehicle access from the South and West where necessary;
- provide improved public transport connections to the site and provide pedestrian/cycleway connections; and
- avoid development in Flood Zones 2 and 3.

Development must be coordinated and comprehensive and in accordance with the Land East of Washington (Washington Meadows) SPD.

Land within Washington Meadows is identified on the Policies Map to be safeguarded for a potential metro/rail station and car park (Policies ST4 and ST5) to provide improved public transport connections to the site.

2.7 The supporting text requires development of the area to be coordinated and comprehensive and in accordance with the Land East of Washington Meadows SPD.

<sup>1</sup> 1,500 is indicative at this stage in plan preparation. Further work is required to determine the capacity of the site.

# 3. Washington Meadows context

## North East Washington context

- 3.1 North East Washington is an area of the city with a significant amount of development potential. The International Advanced Manufacturing Park (IAMP), located to the East of North East Washington, is the premier location for advanced manufacturing and automotive technology. Washington Meadows provides an opportunity to create a new sustainable community delivering 1500 homes for the city. The potential Leamside Line reopening could create sustainable transport connections via metro/rail.
- 3.2 It is important that alongside developing new homes and jobs the Council and its partners invest in and regenerate existing communities, where there is a recognised need for intervention. It is anticipated that Washington Meadows and IAMP will be a catalyst for the regeneration of the wider North East Washington area. The interlinked residential, employment, local centre and transportation proposals of North East Washington will provide existing residents at Sulgrave and new residents of Washington Meadows, business investors and developers with a range of exciting new opportunities, facilities and services. Public and private investment in the area will undoubtedly bring regeneration benefits to Sulgrave.

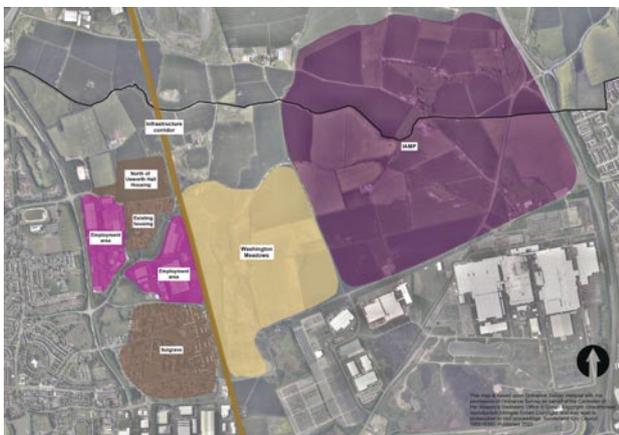


Figure 1: North East Washington

## Washington Meadows context

- 3.3 Washington Meadows will form a natural extension to the popular Washington. The site is located on the north eastern edge of Washington close to Nissan and west of the planned 150ha International Advanced Manufacturing Park (IAMP). To the north of the site is agricultural land, to the east IAMP, to the south Nissan and Elm Tree Farm Garden Nursery & Tearoom, and to the west of the site is the former Leamside Railway Line. The site is approximately 98 hectares in size.



Figure 2: Washington Meadows

## Washington Meadows policy context

- 3.4 The adopted CSDP sets out the Council’s long-term plan for development across the city to 2033. It sought to address the lack of development potential in the area to ensure Washington could continue to thrive as a sustainable community. Washington is a highly sustainable location, with good transport links to the City Centre, Durham, Gateshead, and Newcastle. However, for some time the area has been constrained from development by tight Green Belt boundaries and a lack of available land for development.
- 3.5 The CSDP submission documents proposed to release eight Green Belt sites in Washington for residential development, providing approximately 670 dwellings. However, during the examination of the CSDP, the planning inspector recommended several of the sites should be retained as Green Belt and not brought forward for residential development. This resulted in a deficit of approximately 340 dwellings in Washington and resulted in only 7% of future housing for the city as a whole being located within Washington.
- 3.6 Policy SS3 of the adopted CSDP safeguards Land to the East of Washington (Washington Meadows) for future development beyond the plan period. The CSDP makes it clear that consideration will be given to an early release of the safeguarded land through the A&D Plan, if required.
- 3.7 In preparation of the A&D Plan and its supporting evidence base, it became clear that in order to ensure a sufficient supply of deliverable and developable housing sites within the city throughout the plan period and beyond (including a buffer of approximately 10% to ensure deliverability), it would be necessary to release the Safeguarded Land early. Through its early release, it would also help to ensure an appropriate supply of housing land within the Washington sub-area and the city as a whole. Further justification for the early release of the safeguarded land can be found in the Safeguarded Land Report which forms part of the evidence base for the Draft A&D Plan.
- 3.8 To ensure that Washington Meadows meets its potential and realises the Council’s and community’s aspirations, a comprehensive

approach to its development is necessary to ensure that the infrastructure required to make the site sustainable is delivered in a timely manner.

- 3.9 Washington Meadows will deliver a sustainable new community in a high quality, distinct, well designed, landscape setting providing an attractive and desirable place to live. Development of the area will respond to the site’s spatial context and incorporate all the necessary components to achieve a healthy and vibrant new community. The new sustainable neighbourhood will provide a mix of housing sizes, types and tenures, including affordable housing and homes which are energy efficient with low embodied carbon.

## Washington Meadows - reopening the Leamside Line

- 3.10 The former Leamside Line provides opportunities for a range of rail uses including improving connectivity between Washington and Sunderland (by taking in the former Penshaw-Pallion line) and southwards into the Coalfield area (Figure 3).

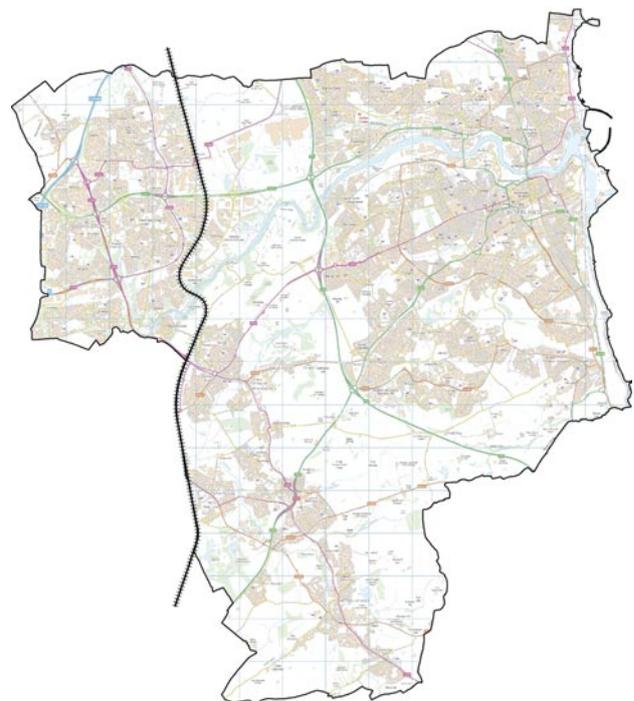


Figure 3: Leamside Line

- 3.11 Since closure of the line in 1991 several studies have considered the issues and opportunities associated with the reintroduction of passenger, freight and high speed trains and the benefits this would offer

Sunderland and the North East region. The re-opening of the Leamside Line is supported through the North East Rail Statement, which seeks to implement regional rail improvements over the next fifteen years that deliver economic benefits.

- 3.12 The Leamside Line provides opportunities to extend Metro operations to Washington and is particularly important to Sunderland as it provides direct access to the East Coast Mainline, which is one of the arterial rail links South and North. The re-opening of the Leamside Line would help to remove freight trains from the East Coast Main Line (ECML) and Durham Coast Line, increasing capacity for passenger trains and unlocking additional destinations that could be connected with Sunderland.
- 3.13 To protect the Leamside Line, the CSDP safeguarded the route. Its protection is reinforced by the neighbouring local authorities of Newcastle, Gateshead and Durham, who support the line's protection within their respective Local Plans to deliver additional passenger services or freight services should the need arise.
- 3.14 The Council will continue to work with its sub-regional partners and transport infrastructure stakeholders to investigate the potential of this line and will support proposals that benefit the city.

### Safeguarding land for a new Station in Washington Meadows

- 3.15 The Draft A&D Plan identifies land (Figure 2) to be safeguarded for a new railway station and associated car parking. The Council is currently preparing a Rail Study which will consider the feasibility of a new Washington station. The Study will propose an appropriate station location, size and layout.

### Washington Meadows site constraints

- 3.16 There are a range of constraints that could affect the quantum of development at Washington Meadows, the scheme viability and its deliverability. Below is a summary of the potential constraints and illustrated in Figure 4.

Connectivity	
	Two access points required. A bridge will be required over the Leamside Line for both pedestrians and vehicles.
	Need for a new estate road through the site.
	Strategic road network impacts and cumulative impacts on the local road network.
	Land required for a Train Station and car park to serve Leamside Line.
	Development buffers required alongside Leamside Line. Will impact on developable area. Potential to be Rail and Metro.
	Works will be required to the existing Leamside Line crossing point at Usworth.
Infrastructure/Utilities	
	Gas pipe through part of the site. A Buffer will be required.
	Electricity pylons across the site. A Buffer will be required unless pylons relocated.
	Ensuring access to (electricity) in the area.
Environment	
	Site is very wet, with a river/stream and ponds within the site boundary.
	Flooding is a problem, particularly sensitive to the north-west of the site. Parts of the site are designated within Flood Zones 2 and 3 which will limit developable area.
	Environmentally sensitive area in terms of biodiversity, wildlife and habitats. The site is located within a Strategic Wildlife Network and in close proximity to designated Local Wildlife Sites.
	Ecological mitigation and biodiversity net gains
Social	
	Limited access to services and facilities as physically separated from the rest of Washington by the Leamside Lane.
	Education facilities may be required.
	Retail facilities may be required.

Table 1: Washington Meadows Site Constraints and Opportunities

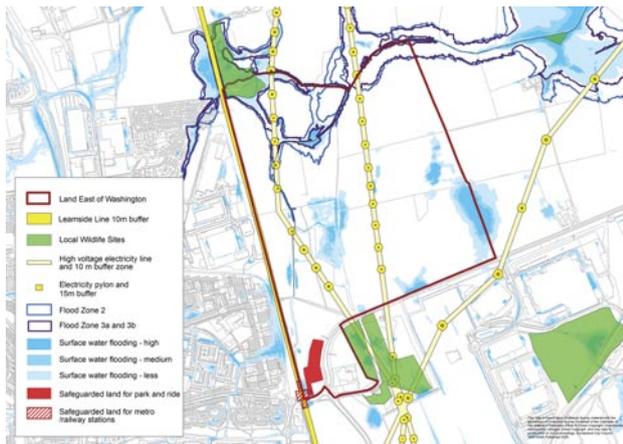


Figure 4: Constraints

## Washington Meadows vision

3.17 The Council’s aspiration is that Washington Meadows will be a sustainable new development set within an attractive, well planned and well designed settlement. A natural expansion to Washington, the new village will provide much needed new, high quality sustainable family homes.

# 4. Scope of the SPD

- 4.1 The Washington Meadows SPD will expand upon Draft A&D Policy SS9 and provide further guidance on the comprehensive development of Land East of Washington. The SPD will:
- provide a vision and strategic objectives for the area;
  - define key development principles and concepts to enable a strategic approach to delivery;
  - provide a masterplan framework, incorporating design parameters and principles to ensure a high standard of design and sustainability;
  - identify requirements and provide a broad strategy to deliver supporting infrastructure; and
  - form part of the evidence base for the emerging A&D Plan, by demonstrating the site’s suitability and deliverability.

4.2 The SPD will comprehensively cover the following key strategic issues:

<b>Natural environment</b>	Natural Heritage Landscape Character GI & Wildlife Corridors Greenspace
<b>Built environment</b>	Built Heritage Built Form Listed Buildings Archaeology
<b>Social infrastructure</b>	Accessibility to services and facilities including Retail Health Services Education
<b>Access and connectivity</b>	Gateways and Arrivals Vehicular Access Pedestrian Access Cycle Routes and Access Public transport - including bus, rail and metro

<b>Utilities</b>	Gas Electricity Renewables Water
<b>Pollution</b>	Noise
<b>Flood risk and drainage</b>	
<b>Contamination</b>	
<b>Infrastructure requirements and costs</b>	
<b>Phasing and delivery</b>	

Table 2: Washington Meadows SPD Key Strategic Issues

## Evidence

4.3 As part of the Draft A&D Plan the Council is preparing an evidence base to assess the cumulative impact of development. This evidence, as listed in Figure 5, should be considered alongside this Scoping Report.

<b>Safeguarded Land Justification</b>
A technical paper setting out the planning case has been prepared to justify the need to allocate Land East of Washington (Washington Meadows) in the Draft A&D Plan.
<b>Viability Assessment</b>
A Viability Assessment has been undertaken to determine the viability of typologies of sites in the Draft A&D Plan. At this stage, the Council does not know all costs associated with the development of Land East of Washington (Washington Meadows), therefore a site viability assessment will be undertaken following this consultation.
<b>Transport Assessment (TA)</b>
A TA has been undertaken for the Draft A&D Plan. The Council is working with Highways England to determine the impacts the developments could have on the Strategic Highways Network. The Council will also prepare a detailed TA for the area following this consultation. This TA will look at junctions beyond the Sunderland administrative boundary if necessary.
<b>Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)</b>
A SFRA for the Draft A&D Plan has been prepared.
<b>Education Report</b>
To establish future education capacity, an education report has been prepared. Further work is required to identify specific education requirements as a result of Washington Meadows development.
<b>Infrastructure Delivery Plan</b>
The Draft A&D Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) has been prepared, which identifies the infrastructure requirements to deliver the development in the plan period. The Council will prepare an IDP for Washington Meadows. This will be prepared in parallel to this SPD.
<b>Sustainability Assessment</b>
A sustainability Assessment for the Draft A&D Plan has been prepared to assess the sustainability of the developments in the plan.

**Table 3: A&D Evidence**

4.4 The Council is preparing a suite of technical studies to support the Washington Meadows SPD, as listed in Figure 6. The Council will publish these studies for comment at the next stage of the SPD consultation process.

**Ecology Studies**

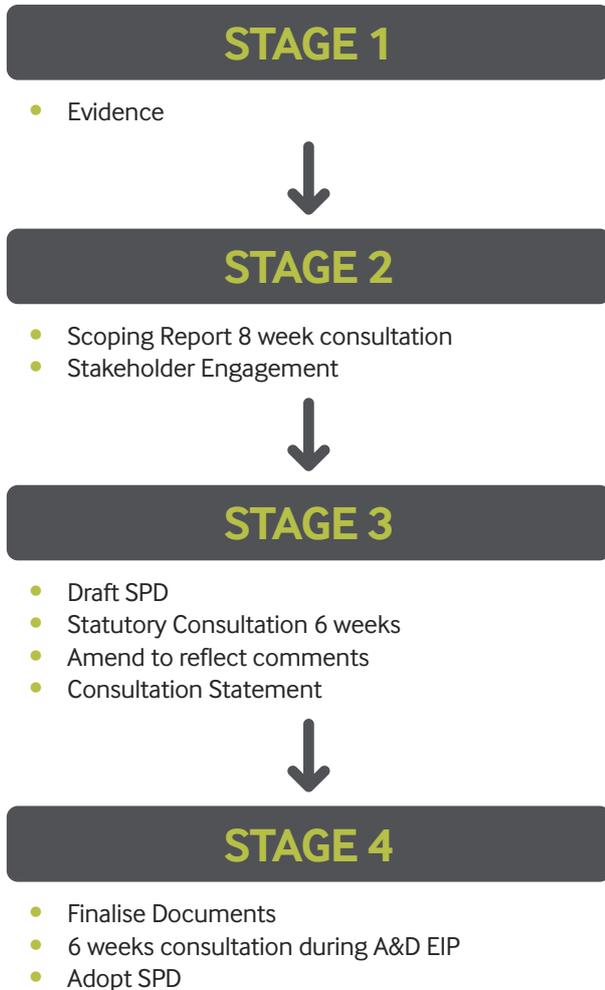
including Wintering Birds, Breeding Birds, Newts, Brown Hair/Otter and Water Vole/bat activity and Phase 1 Habitat Survey

<b>Ecology Studies</b>
including Wintering Birds, Breeding Birds, Newts, Brown Hair/Otter and Water Vole/bat activity and Phase 1 Habitat Survey
<b>Rail Study</b>
<b>Transport Assessment</b>
<b>Viability Assessment</b>
<b>Archaeological Assessment</b>
<b>Noise Assessment</b>
<b>Infrastructure Delivery Plan</b>

**Table 4: Washington Meadows Evidence**

## 5. Timescales and next steps

5.1 There are four stages to preparing an SPD as shown below:



5.2 The SPD will be prepared in tandem with the Draft A&D Plan and will follow a similar programme.

5.3 As part of the process for delivering the Washington Meadows SPD, you are invited to respond to the consultation. We encourage representations to be sent electronically. All comments should be made in writing to the Council’s Strategic and Sustainable Plans Team using the contact details provided below:

Email: [planningpolicy@sunderland.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@sunderland.gov.uk)

In writing to: Strategic and Sustainable Plans Team, Room 2.66, Civic Centre, Burdon Road, Sunderland SR2 7DN

Stage	Date
1. Preparation of evidence	Ongoing
2. Scoping Report Consultation	18 December 2020– 12 February 2021
3. Draft SPD	Summer 2020
4. Revised SPD and adoption	Subject to A&D examination timetable

Table 5: Timetable for preparation of the Washington Meadows SPD





