

Alan

When you asked your questions they were to us simple and obvious in the current circumstances, that is why we saw no need at that point for a qualifying statement. To summarise...

1) Spelthorne has built in front of its housing requirement for the last 12 years and is continuing to do so. Obviously this has taken land no longer available now. In planning terms this is 'Front Loading'. In practical terms we have already 'done our bit'.

2) There are significant Brown field sites in Spelthorne still available for housing. We believe these should be used before there is any consideration of the Green Belt.

3) We still have not completed a housing needs assessment so there is no evidence as to what our current housing need is. So why review the Green Belt at this stage?

4) The government has made this statement on several occasions. Most recently last October in a major statement by Eric Pickles. Why are Spelthorne determined to ignore it?

Unmet housing need (including for traveller sites) is unlikely to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and other harm to constitute the "very special circumstances" justifying inappropriate development on a site within the Green Belt.

This has to bring me on to the covering letter from the Conservatives which is deeply flawed, ranging from the grossly misleading to being down right false. Confining myself to the major failings only please see the notes below.

(I am also aware they have released a 'Truth about Kempton' we are dealing with those failings in another way)

cllr Ian Beardsmore
Spelthorne Liberal Democrats

Conservative covering letter: major failings

Para 2

"..consider a significant amount of demographic information"

Misleadingly incomplete, it equally has to consider a large amount of other information as well. This includes such things as the environment and infrastructure. The local plan is about the whole picture not one small part of it.

Para 3

"A significant part of the record of the deliberations has already been put in the public domain"

Wrong it was not placed it was Leaked into the public domain and security has subsequently tightened to try and stop this happening again.

Para 4

Frankly almost entirely wrong.

"The planning Inspectorate will require it to meet National Targets"

Totally false. The opposite is true! All the reforms of planning under this government have been about removing centralised targets. Plenty of references to sustain this try

HANSARD 28 Apr 2014 : Column 492W (Reply to Martin Horwood)

Housing: Construction

Nick Boles: This returns power to local authorities and communities to determine whether it is appropriate to develop on green belt land, taking into account the strong protections in the National Planning Policy Framework.

"...as well as fit with the local plans of neighbouring authorities."

Again totally wrong a complete mis-reading of 'Duty to Co operate' by someone who clearly knows nothing of planning.

NPPG Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 9-001-20140306

"The duty to Co-operate is not a duty to agree"

"...If it does not meet their criteria.."

Wrong again the Planning Inspectorate are a judicial body. They test evidence such as the robustness and soundness of the case presented by the local authority. They don't make rules.

"would lead to the council having no adopted policy"

Wrong this is just cheap scaremongering we have an adopted plan until 2026. This has been agreed and passed by the Planning Inspectorate, and is recognised by them and would be recognised by any court. As such we already have the means to defend our Green Belt (if we want to)