

## **1. Does Policy ME1 provide a robust framework for safeguarding biodiversity and geodiversity?**

NPPF, chapter 11, is very detailed in the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment.

CPRE feels the Local Plan has not been totally in accordance with the Government guidelines.

NPPF, Paragraph 110, saying that plans should allocate land with the least environmental value, well we have no evidence/information on any of the sites proposed. If ecological surveys have taken place, we have not seen them to discuss their validity. We do not know who commissioned them. If it was the developers we feel this is wrong. The survey(s) should be carried out by an independent ecologist, initially employed by the Local Authority department responsible for the protection of the environment, on behalf of the developers.

## **7. Do the SANG guidelines:**

- We think that the guidelines for directing people to the SANGS are adequate.
- We think sufficient clarity exists re the quality and characteristics on SANGS.
- Sufficient flexibility to allow site specific circumstances?

This last point needs some expansion in the Core Strategy. The guidelines say the SANGS must aim to provide a variety of habitats for visitors. It does not stress that varieties of habitats depend on the individual sites and their ecology. Our greatest concern is that they will all look similar and rather artificial.

Many visitors would doubtless still enjoy the experience, but many dog walkers and more serious walkers who prefer to 'walk on the wild side' may return to the heaths. This could also happen on sites that are particularly popular and become crowded. For some people this would destroy the previous tranquillity and too many feet could compromise biodiversity.

The text should be amended as follows:

Appendix 5. Paragraph 5.28/12. ***The variety of habitats should depend on the individual sites, their natural habitat and characteristics. All SANGS should not be required to incorporate all the features but should reflect and enhance their natural surroundings and biodiversity.***