HS097

MATTER 8 – CREATING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Representor: Toni Gay
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Questions: 8.1, 8.3, 8.4 and those elements of 8.6–8.8 concerning effectiveness and environmental consequences

Response

Matter 8 is relevant because the Inspectors ask whether the Plan's climate-change and flood-risk policies are positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy.

Question 8.1 asks whether the approach to climate change is effective and justified.

Of particular relevance, Question 8.3 asks whether the proposed requirement for “no significant harm to the natural environment” is necessary for soundness. Question 8.4 concerns integrated water management.

My view is that preventing significant environmental harm should be an operative development requirement rather than simply an aspiration.

Sustainable development cannot be achieved merely through carbon reduction if development simultaneously creates avoidable harm to biodiversity, habitats, drainage systems or the wider natural environment.

Change sought

The Plan should contain clear and enforceable wording requiring development to avoid significant harm to the natural environment and appropriately mitigate unavoidable effects.

Where flood risk, drainage, water management or environmental effects are material, the necessary measures should be established sufficiently early and secured before the relevant development proceeds.