Biodiversity Net Gain and Offsetting

This “Call for Sites” is an opportunity for agents and landowners to submit land which they believe could be suitable for providing Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) as part of an offsetting scheme.

The Government has announced its intention to introduce the achievement of a mandatory minimum 10% BNG for development subject to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. This is set out in the Environment Bill.

In the first instance development should seek to avoid adverse impacts to biodiversity or to minimise them by appropriate on site mitigation. Where this is not possible then an opportunity to mitigate off site could be an option. This could involve the allocation of sites for the purpose of BNG offsetting mitigation. The sites would need to be available and managed for BNG for a minimum period of 30 years in line with the recommendation in the Environment Bill.

The Council particularly encourages proposals that have the potential to buffer or expand existing habitats, link existing habitats together or provide stepping-stones between existing habitats. For example, connecting woodland blocks, buffering ancient woodland and species rich grassland creation this is expected to deliver the greatest gains for biodiversity, by delivering practical improvements to the existing ecological network.

There may be the possibility that multiple benefits can be delivered on the same site including biodiversity net gain, nitrogen neutrality, carbon offsetting etc.

Sites which already have a high ecological value are unlikely to be suitable as they will not easily be able to achieve the gains required.