

Re question 21 Net gains in biodiversity

RSPB recommended principles for biodiversity net gain

- **1) Adhere to the mitigation hierarchy** (*i.e. avoid harm as a priority, mitigate where this is not possible, compensate as a last resort*)
- **2) Do not weaken existing environmental protections for designated sites and species**
- **3) Secure biodiversity net gain first, and do not trade biodiversity against other environmental benefits** (*for example carbon, water management or amenity benefits*)
- **4) Do not allow offsetting of irreplaceable habitats and wildlife** (*those that cannot be recreated within the country's legal definition of perpetuity (125 years in England)*)
- **5) Are inclusive and equitable to the people affected by development** (*providing reasonable levels of benefit and democratic input for those affected by biodiversity losses*)
- **6) Contribute to delivery of strategic local, national and international ecological networks** (*eg the proposed Local Nature Recovery Strategies in England*)
- **7) Are mandatory for almost all development, in order to account for the cumulative impacts of development on nature** (*a de minimus threshold that excludes e.g. household extensions would be reasonable*)
- **8) Take transparent decisions that deliver reliable net gains and best-practice management** (*using appropriate methods for demonstrating positive biodiversity effects such as a robust metric and good practice management*)
- **9) Secure net gains permanently** (*in line with the common legal definition of perpetuity*)
- **10) Provide additional conservation outcomes**