

Telford & Wrekin Local Plan: Examination in Public Initial Statement by the Council – Matter 6: Environment

1. Telford & Wrekin has a varied and rich natural environment. Residents and businesses frequently identify our diverse and pleasant natural environment as a prime attraction.
2. The borough is diverse in terms of landscape, biodiversity and geodiversity and nationally and locally designated sites recognise our most valuable assets. There are extensive woodlands, meadows, rivers and streams associated with the Ironbridge Gorge in the south and contrasting extensive farmlands with open views in the north. There are also a rich variety of urban open spaces providing recreational opportunities, visual amenity, access and safe havens for wildlife within Telford and the Market Towns. For this reason, we have promoted policies within our plan to protect these valued features in line with NPPF.
3. A part of the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty crosses into the borough from neighbouring Shropshire and includes an iconic feature, the Wrekin hill. The area of the borough covered by this national landscape designation is small but is a key recognisable landscape feature for people living within, and travelling through, the area.
4. Our plan recognises the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and gives it the highest level of protection. We propose to offer a modification to the wording of policy NE 7: Strategic Landscapes, to clarify this highest level of protection in line with NPPF.
5. Our plan also recognises three distinctive and strategic landscapes in Policy NE7 and seeks to protect them from detrimental change and you will hear more on this during today's session.
6. Since the original landscape master planning of Telford as a New Town a 'Green Network' has been integral to the identity of the borough and has helped to shape the green and wooded nature of Telford as it has matured. Our plan includes a Green Network policy which has been updated in line with the green infrastructure and environmental network principles within NPPF, which is sound and will be effective in protecting the strategic green spaces for which our borough is valued by its residents. This approach to valuing green spaces is consistent with those taken in other maturing new towns. The designation is shown on the Policies Map. Our plan extends the Green Network designation to land within the market town of Newport where this land has been assessed as meeting the functions of the Green Network and is, therefore, compliant with NPPF.

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