



Telford & Wrekin
Co-operative Council

Protect, care and invest
to create a better borough

Development Greening Factor

Interim guidance



Allscott Phase 1. Image used with kind permission from M. Sambrook, SJ Roberts Construction.

July 2026

Introduction

Context

The Council is committed to continuously improve the borough by supporting those who live, work and invest here. As part of this we strive to ensure our neighbourhoods and historical & environment assets are safe and adapt well to a rapidly changing climate.

The Council's Local Plan has been reviewed and has recently gone through Examination in Public. Although it is not expected to be adopted until late 2026, the policies within that document are gaining weight in planning decisions.

The Council is looking to work with developers to deliver its vision of the type of place we aspire to be and involves the responsible and sustainable stewardship of the borough's resources and assets:

- By 2041, Telford and Wrekin will be a Forest Community with an enhanced and protected natural environment that local residents can enjoy close to their doorstep.
- It will be a borough that is adapted to climate change through well connected sustainable transport, energy efficient homes, renewable energy and the location and design of developments.
- During the plan period development will be focussed in the most sustainable locations with good access to facilities, services and job opportunities
- New development will continue to contribute to the health and wellbeing of residents and will provide a mix of homes that meets the changing needs of our population; and
- Inward investment to create jobs and regeneration opportunities will be achieved through new development supporting a more prosperous borough.
- The Council, residents and stakeholders are custodians of the borough's historic assets and environment, and these will be given the highest levels of protection for future generations to come throughout the plan period

Telford is a town set within the landscape which is defined by extensive tree planting. As a 'Forest Community' this approach will be used across the borough's new developments with a strong emphasis on the retention and provision of green infrastructure as set out in the policies within the Plan, to help create vibrant communities that are well adapted to climate change.

Development Greening Factor is a major policy tool to assist new development to deliver this vision.

Draft Local Plan Policy NE4 Development Greening Factor

Following the Examination in Public of the submitted draft Local Plan, the Council has published its Schedule of Main Modification ([Schedule of Main Modifications - Local Plan](#)) which underwent public consultation until 20th July 2026. Therefore, wording set out within the policy is subject to change before the final adopted Local Plan. The current text of Policy NE4 Development Greening Factor, including Main Modifications as agreed with Inspectors, reads as follows:

Policy introduction:

7.25 The Development Greening Factor (often known as Urban Greening Factor) is a key element of the National Green Infrastructure Framework. The Council sees it as well placed to link biodiversity net gain and Forest Community requirements, whilst making development more resilient to the impact of climate change. It uses a simple process that provides a numerical score for a development. More beneficial land cover types, such as woodland, score higher than others which provide less green infrastructure benefits, such as tarmac. This is then added up in a Greening Factor calculator to give the development a total Greening Factor Score of between 0 and 1.

7.26 Policy NE4 sets out the Council's Greening Factor which aims to increase the quality, quantity and functionality of green infrastructure across the built environment.

Policy wording:

- 1. All major development proposals should contribute towards the greening of the borough through the integration of multifunctional green and blue infrastructure within a development's site design.*
- 2. All major residential development proposals, or proposals that are predominately residentially led, should aim to meet a minimum Greening Factor of 0.4.*
- 3. All major non-residential development, or proposals that are predominately non-residentially led, should aim to meet a Greening Factor of 0.3.*
- 4. The Greening Factor should be met as far as possible onsite, with any shortfall provided off-site as close as possible to the donor site. Off-site provision should enhance local green infrastructure, having regard to relevant guidance and evidence such as the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, Playing Pitch and Outdoor Recreation Strategy and current climate and green infrastructure mapping. Off-site provision will be secured by conditions and/or planning obligations.*

Supporting text:

7.27. Development Greening Factor is based on the national Urban Greening Factor model by Natural England. It is intended to complement other green infrastructure

requirements such as open space, landscaping, sustainable drainage and biodiversity net gain. Therefore, a site's Greening Factor can benefit from a variety of green infrastructure elements, such as the retention of semi-natural vegetation, the provision of street trees, hedges, areas of flower rich perennial planting, green roofs, green walls, ponds, wetlands and certain sustainable drainage systems, including rain gardens and permeable paving.

7.28 This is not intended to be a parallel requirement. Developers are strongly encouraged to use creative solutions to stack their varied site requirements to efficiently and effectively achieve their Greening Factor. By clearly following the Council's approach, applicants will be able to demonstrate, during the site master planning process that they can deliver an appropriate level of greening, and increase the climate resilience of their development.

7.29 The Council is developing guidance and tools to assist local developers in designing and efficiently evidencing their Greening Factor. This will be based on, and augment, that provided to date by Natural England in its Urban Greening Factor Standard^x. The Natural England standard will be used as the foundation for the Council's Greening Factor and should be referred to until the Council's guidance is published.

7.30 The Council also intends to create a green infrastructure strategy and guidance to inform local priority setting and design. Other relevant resources include Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework GIS Mapping tool, the Woodland Trust's Tree Equity Score UK, and the Climate Just webtool.

Footnotes: ^x [Natural England's Urban Greening Factor Standard User Guide and accompanying spreadsheet](#)

General guidance

What is Development Greening Factor?

It is a national tool and part of [Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework](#). It is a way to come up with a simple numerical "score" for a development's green infrastructure and especially climate resilience.

The scoring is explained more below. However, in essence, each of a development's broad landcover types (tarmac, lawn, shrub bed etc) are allocated different factor scores between 0 and 1. This factor score is based on their relative environmental benefit. The data is combined in a calculator tool and an overall factor score for the development is given.

Unlike Biodiversity Net Gain, it does not relate to what is on site before a development. It only measures and scores what the end result of the completed development will be. The policy has different score thresholds for residential (0.4) and non-residential (0.3) schemes.

Natural England has produced an [Urban Greening Factor Standard User Guide](#) to fully explain the methodology. The Council has created a calculator and BNG conversion tool to assist you and will provide further guidance over time.

To help visualise the process, Natural England's User Guide provides this example:

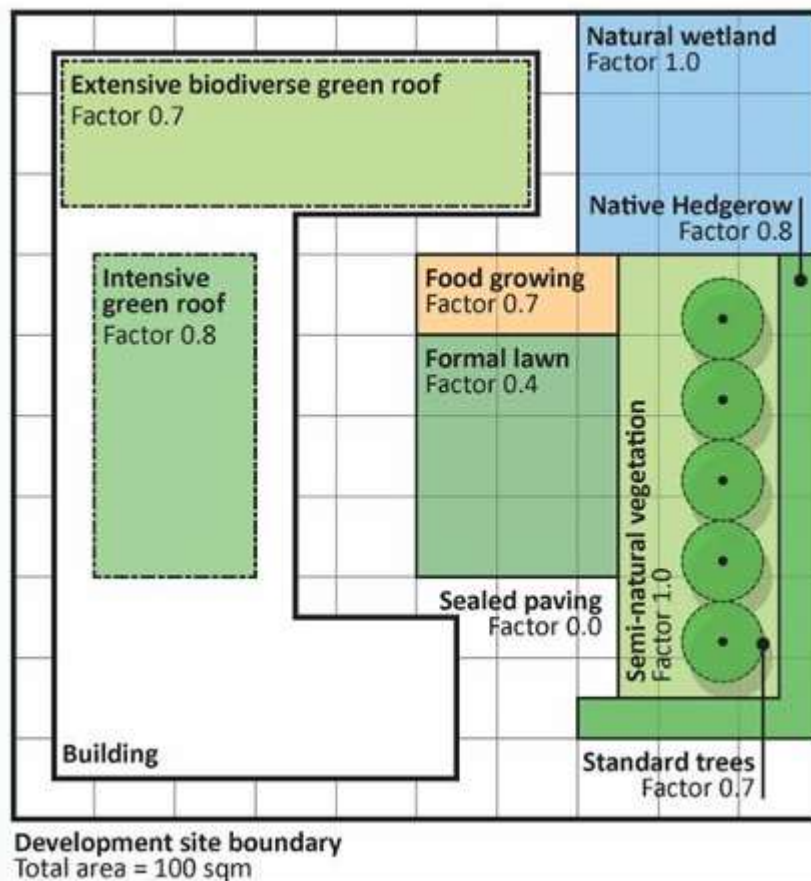


Image 1. Theoretical site plan showing landcover scores

Landcover type	Area (m ²)	Factor score	Total
Standard trees	3.93	× 0.7	2.75
Food growing/allotment	2.50	× 0.7	1.75
Amenity grassland	7.50	× 0.4	3.00
Intensive green roof	8.00	× 0.8	6.40
Extensive green roof	12.00	× 0.7	8.40
Wetlands/open water	9.00	× 1.0	9.00
Sealed paving	28.75	× 0.0	0.00
		Total	45.70
		Total Site Area (m ²)	100
		DGF (45.7/100)	0.46

Table 1. Theoretical site DGF calculation

This theoretical example would get a Development Greening Factor of 0.46 which passes the benchmark for both residential (0.4) and non-residential (0.3) developments.

When do we need to start thinking about it?

As with most planning issues, it is wise to scope the implications of this early in the process. Incorporating it into master planning for your site will get the best out of the development for you and future site users, by informing various aspects of your design. This will help to prevent unexpected problems later when changes are likely to be more difficult and expensive.

The Development Greening Factor is a key policy to deliver the Council's vision and ensure a robust green infrastructure for the borough. This will make it a better place now and through a changing climate. We know that every neighbourhood and site is unique and that every development will have different priorities. Therefore, it is important to understand how your specific development can best contribute to this and to maximise the effectiveness, and efficiency, of your layout.

As clearly set out in the draft policy and text above, this is not a parallel requirement; existing land use requirements should combine to deliver your score. We strongly encourage you to use the Development Greening Factor to assist the design of many elements of your development including amenity open space, drainage and biodiversity. The more you can stack these functions, the more efficient your layout will become.

What data is out there to help us understand our development's context?

The Council is looking to develop a new Green Infrastructure strategy that will link many of our priorities such as play, sports, health, climate, drainage, access and biodiversity. Until then, there are a number of excellent free web-based tools to help give you an understanding of priorities in your development's area, these include:

[Green Network](#) – We are aiming to get the Local Plan's revised Green Network mapped onto this webtool soon, including the current strengths of specific locations within it.

[Development guidance on our Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#) – This gives you more information on local biodiversity priorities and development.

[The Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Local Nature Recovery Map](#) – This is the adopted GIS map of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and may have suggested actions for your site or its local area.

[Telford & Wrekin Council Playing Pitch and Outdoor Recreation Strategy](#) – Our identification of local outdoor recreation priorities.

[Tree Equity Score UK](#) – This shows which communities would benefit most, from planting more trees, to safeguard public health in a changing climate.

[Green Infrastructure Map](#) – This is an online GIS tool from Natural England which has a vast array of datasets, many relating to accessible greenspace.

[The Environmental Benefits from Nature Tool](#) – This is more complex tool from Natural England helps integrate Biodiversity Net Gain with green infrastructure benefits.

[ClimateJust](#) – A web map which shows the relative level of risk that your site's neighbourhood is at from the predicted increases in flooding and heat and includes the specific drivers for this.

As you move through the development planning process you will also be collecting data about your own site. This will vary between developments but could include assessments about your site's biodiversity and drainage. These can help you refine your provision to accommodate the site's specific pressures and opportunities.



How do you calculate a Development Greening Factor score?

Each type of landcover has a different “score” with natural habitat generally, like woodland scoring highly and others like tarmac, very low. There are standard definitions for each landcover type and their associated factor score in table 2 of Natural England’s [Urban Greening Factor Standard User Guide](#) (p.19-30). The landcover types and their scores are given below.

Landcover type	Factor score
Semi-natural vegetation and wetlands retained on site (including existing / mature trees)	1
Semi-natural vegetation established on site	1
Standard / semi-mature trees (planted in connected tree pits)	0.9
Native hedgerow planting (using mixed native species)	0.8
Standard / semi-mature trees (planted in individual tree pits)	0.7
Food growing, orchards and allotments	0.7
Flower rich perennial and herbaceous planting	0.7
Single Species or mixed hedge planting (including linear planting of mature shrubs)	0.6
Amenity shrub and ground cover planting	0.5
Amenity grasslands including formal lawns	0.4
Intensive green roof (meets the Green Roof Organisation / GRO Code)	0.8
Extensive biodiverse green roof (meets the GRO Code, may include Biosolar)	0.7
Extensive green roof (meets GRO Code)	0.5
Extensive sedum only green roof (does not meet the GRO Code)	0.3
Green facades and modular living walls (rooted in soil or with irrigation)	0.5
Wetlands and semi-natural open water	1
Rain gardens and vegetated attenuation basins	0.7
Open swales and unplanted detention basins	0.5
Water features (unplanted and chlorinated)	0.2
Open aggregate and granular paving	0.2
Partially sealed and semi-permeable paving	0.1
Sealed paving (including concrete and asphalt)	0

Table 2. Landcover types and their factor scores

The total area of each of these landcover types across your final layout are entered into a calculator, along with that of your red line boundary. It then uses these factor scores to automatically generate the development’s average, overall, score.

Many developments will have Biodiversity Metrics and with this habitat mapping in GIS files. These will already have accurate measurements of various landcover types, many of

which could be broken into several parcels scattered across your site. Using these existing data sources will significantly speed up your calculations.

On occasion the UKHab classification used for Biodiversity Net Gain and the classification in Natural England's Greening Factor User guide do not always align. Therefore, some thought will be needed to correctly translate them.

To help you in this and streamline your reporting processes, we have adapted Natural England's standard calculator (scoring and cover types remain unchanged). The calculator includes tabs which, using suitable professional judgement, assists your conversion of BNG habitats into Development Greening Factor landcover types and vice versa.

How do we evidence our Development Greening Factor score to Planning?

When you submit your application, we ask that you please provide a completed TWC Development Greening Factor Excel workbook. This simple file allows you to bundle the following requirements together:

- ☐ A summary of how the site's Development Greening Factor has been designed to meet local need via various evidence sources
- ☐ An indicative Development Greening Factor land cover map of your proposal
- ☐ An indicative Development Greening Factor score from an inbuilt calculator

Biodiversity Net Gain and landscaping requirements will often be part of permissions for developments where Development Greening Factor is relevant. As these are mainly dealt with at condition stage, it is likely only to be possible to finalise your Greening Factor score then, once all the various details have been aligned. Therefore, it is likely a Development Greening Factor pre-commencement condition will be added to your permission. This same template workbook should be used to provide your final rationale, map and score to enable us to assess all the information needed to discharge the condition.

If you think at any stage that you will fall short of your required factor score, and need to provide offsite provision to offset this, please discuss this with us as early as possible in the process. We can then advise and assist you to help prevent unexpected problems, delays and costs to your development further down the line.

