

# Telford & Wrekin Council, Shropshire



## Green Infrastructure Framework case study

The exceptional green infrastructure network of Telford & Wrekin is a lasting legacy of the new town landscape plan for Telford, developed in the 1960s and 70s, and continually enhanced since. As part of a review of the Local Plan, Telford & Wrekin Council have embedded Natural England's green infrastructure standards into policy.



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### What was the vision?

Telford & Wrekin Council's vision for their borough is of a successful, sustainable place with vibrant, diverse communities living healthy lives and enjoying meaningful relationships with nature. When much-needed new homes are built, they are designed with nature at the heart, continuing the early new town vision of a forest community.

### How did the Green Infrastructure Framework help to realise the vision?

Telford & Wrekin Council have embedded Natural England's Urban Greening Factor Standard and Urban Nature Recovery Standard into policy, providing a framework for measuring and improving green infrastructure across the borough. This requires a minimum Urban Greening Factor of 0.4 for major residential development, and 0.3 for non-residential. The Urban Nature Recovery Standard has aided the creation and protection of more areas for wildlife, and made sure the areas are better managed through the declaration of Local Nature Reserves.



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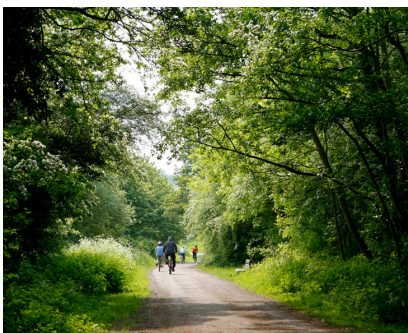
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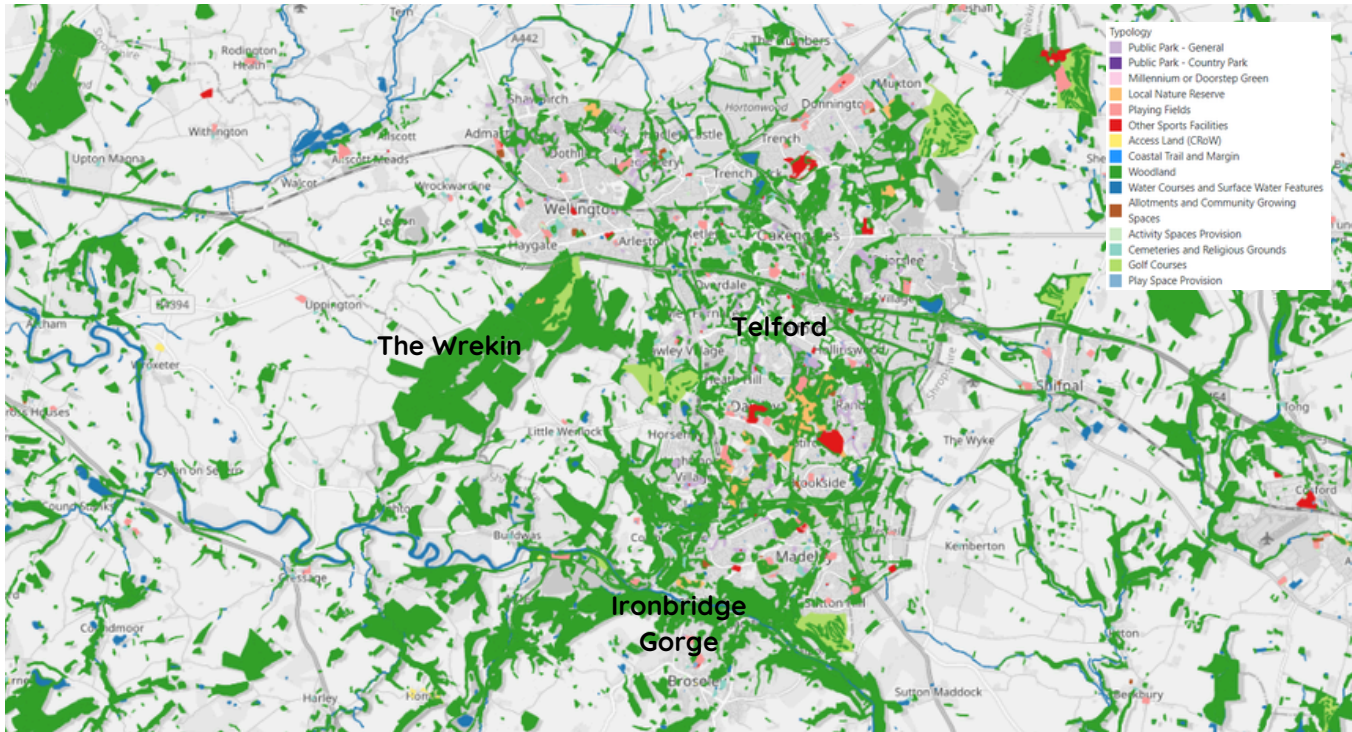
Telford & Wrekin Council have prioritised habitat restoration, wildlife support, greenspace investment and tree management.



The Tree Cities of the World programme recognises Telford’s commitment to urban forestry.



Telford Town Park is an award-winning park and Local Nature Reserve attracting around 700,000 visitors every year.



Map produced from the England Green Infrastructure Mapping Database on 28/04/2025. © Crown Copyright and database rights 2025. Ordnance Survey 100022861.



20+ Local Nature Reserves support wildlife and benefit local people. Meeting the Urban Nature Recovery Standard.



89% of households are within 300 metres of greenspace.



26% tree cover across the borough, giving 77% of households access to a protected woodland within 500 metres.

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## What's been achieved?

Proactive tree and woodland management resulted in Telford being awarded Tree City of the World status by the United Nations in 2023. A 150 hectare green lung has been created in the middle of the town, where Southwater Square links the town centre to popular Telford Town Park, which has been voted one of the best parks in the country.

Telford & Wrekin have four times the national standard for Local Nature Reserves. With twenty+ sites close to where people live, where local authorities have committed to managing land for nature and for people to enjoy that nature. Existing open spaces have been enhanced for wildlife, for example by reducing intensive mowing and introducing wildflower seeding to create meadows that contribute to Biodiversity Net Gain.

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## What were the problems to overcome?

Satisfying the demand for development land, whilst protecting green spaces, has been successfully managed. Unique to Telford & Wrekin, is a Green Guarantee that protects areas of the council's land from any future development, along with Local Nature Reserves and SSSIs, Fields in Trust sites and Village Greens. And the Green Network, a local open space designation that protects connected green spaces throughout the borough, whether they be in private or public ownership. In addition, the Local Plan stipulates a Biodiversity Net Gain of at least 10%, ideally 20%, for all new developments.

## What lessons have been learnt?

The council's prioritisation of the natural environment has attracted inward investment, improved health & wellbeing, helped reduce flooding, improved air quality and protected biodiversity.

## How was the green infrastructure strategy funded?

Financing of green infrastructure enhancement has been achieved through a mixture of revenue funding, capital investments and developer contributions.

## How is the infrastructure being managed and funded going forward?

As a council, Telford & Wrekin have been creative in creating commercial opportunities that generate revenue, such as owning their own solar farm and house building company. This helps fund frontline services, including the maintenance of open spaces. Use of volunteer and 'friends of' groups has also been extremely successful.

In addition, new developments are required to submit a detailed, agreed and fully costed management plan, covering a period of at least 20 years, accompanied by a long-term commitment to undertake management or financial provision.



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## Green Infrastructure Framework Principles: The benefits

### 1. Nature-rich, beautiful places

Since the 1960s, the vision has been of a forest community with nature at the heart. The Local Plan is a continuation of a long-standing commitment to the green infrastructure of Telford & Wrekin. The plan embeds the Green Infrastructure Framework's Urban Greening Factor Standard and the Urban Nature Recovery Standard, and stipulates a Biodiversity Net Gain of at least 10%, ideally 20%, for new developments.

### 2. Active and healthy places

Telford & Wrekin's extensive network of green infrastructure supports active lifestyles, community cohesion and nature connections, benefiting physical health, mental health & wellbeing and quality of life.

### 3. Thriving and prospering communities

Telford & Wrekin's green infrastructure network helps to create and support a prospering community that benefits everyone. It adds value by creating a quality environment that supports the local economy.

### 4. Improved water management

The council have adopted a proactive strategy to mitigate and adapt to climate change, taking full account of flood risk and water supply. Any new development must implement a Sustainable Drainage System capable of dealing with a 1 in 100 year storm event, +30% allowance for future climate change.

### 5. Resilient and climate positive places

The revision of the Local Plan has been an opportunity to develop robust policy that supports and promotes a move to carbon neutrality, including through consideration of how new development can adapt to the impacts of climate change. For example, through the maintenance and extension of tree canopy cover.

## Green Infrastructure Framework Principles: The attributes

### 1. Multifunctional

Telford & Wrekin have a track record of not compromising on green infrastructure requirements and seeking viable solutions through multifunctional greenspaces. In this way green infrastructure delivers a range of functions and benefits for people and nature, with an emphasis on amenity, biodiversity and Sustainable Drainage Systems, promoting healthy lifestyles with access to nature on the doorstep. The council requires major development to provide and/or contribute to the provision of multifunctional open space that serves and meets the needs of the development as well as wider needs.

### 2. Varied

The green infrastructure network of Telford & Wrekin demonstrates an outstanding commitment to Local Nature Reserves, as well as offering a diverse selection of more formal parkland and recreation areas to meet the recreational needs of an expanding population, combined with wider landscaped areas valuable for informal recreation.

### 3. Connected

Connected green spaces are being protected throughout the borough, designating land as Green Network, whether it be in private or public ownership. This provides ecological networks, corridors and stepping stones that allow wildlife to move, and thrive within urban environments. Footpaths and cycleways also form accessible 'green ways' through urban areas, encouraging active travel.

### 4. Accessible

As well as delivering plentiful green areas, and enhancing existing green infrastructure provision, Telford & Wrekin Council are committed to maintaining and enhancing the local community's access to the countryside via footpaths, cycleways and bridleways.

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## 5. Character

Tree Cities of the World recognises Telford's commitment to urban forestry and the unique character this delivers. Local policy retains and protects trees, hedgerows and woodlands. Policy is also mindful of history, historic features and landmarks, including World Heritage sites at Coalbrookdale and Ironbridge Gorge. Unique archaeological features stand as a legacy to Telford's place in the Industrial Revolution. Post-industrial sites, disused coal mines and mineral quarries also being important habitats.

## Green Infrastructure Framework Principles: The process

### 1. Partnership and vision

Telford & Wrekin Council collaborate with Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) stakeholders to ensure that the LNRS and the Local Plan complement one another, with the LNRS providing evidence to support the Plan's proposals, including urban greening, planned green infrastructure corridors and woodland priority areas. Recognising that the value of biodiversity is not limited by administrative boundaries, the council works actively with neighbouring local authorities, Shropshire Wildlife Trust, Natural England and other conservation agencies to identify species and habitats that are locally important and to draw up plans to assist in their conservation.

### 2. Evidence

Provision of green infrastructure in Telford & Wrekin is informed by the identification of areas of greatest need, using a range of indicators, including socio-economic and environmental data. Analysing the quantity, quality and distribution of the existing provision. This work is documented in the council's Local Green Infrastructure Needs Study (2013) and Green Infrastructure Evidence and Analysis (2012) available on the council's website. New developments must demonstrate how they have responded to and addressed the issues and requirements identified in these documents.

### 3. Plan strategically

Incorporating green infrastructure policy into the Local Plan has aided strategic planning. With policies divided into Urban Greening Factor, strategic greens gaps, green network, Biodiversity Net Gain and the protection and enhancement of greenspaces.

### 4. Design

Well-designed green infrastructure is seen as an integral part of urban design and the council supports developments that respect and respond positively to context and enhance the quality of the local built and natural environment; that provide integrated green infrastructure, with links through the site and to surrounding areas; are safe, attractive and convenient, producing an environment that supports healthy living.

### 5. Managed, valued, monitored and evaluated

New developments are required to submit a detailed, agreed and fully costed management plan, covering a period of at least 20 years, accompanied by a long-term commitment to undertake management or financial provision.



**Delivered by:**

**Telford & Wrekin Council**