



Nature Recovery  
Shropshire and  
Telford & Wrekin

# Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Local Nature Recovery Strategy

## Technical Guidance on the Use of the Strategic Significance Multiplier in the Defra Biodiversity Metric in Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin

March 2026

### Version control

V1 DRAFT	FL	26.8.2025	
V2 DRAFT	FL	17.10.2025	Incorporating comments from LP and AP
V3 FINAL	FL	3.3.2026	Incorporating final changes from LP and AP
V4 FINAL	FL	31.3.2026	Incorporating additional change from AP

## Introduction

This technical guidance has been developed to support the delivery of the Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).

This document provides Technical Guidance on the use of the Strategic Significance Multiplier in the Defra Statutory Biodiversity Metric in Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin and is intended for use by ecological consultants, developers and planning consultants, local authority planning officers and ecologists.

The application of the Strategic Significance Multiplier is a key part of calculating the biodiversity value of pre- and post-development scenarios using the Biodiversity Metric. Application of the multiplier requires an understanding of the mapped and unmapped measures within the LNRS and will vary between LNRS areas.

This guidance applies to the administrative areas of Shropshire Council and Telford & Wrekin Council.

This guidance applies now that the LNRS for Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin has been formally adopted.

If you would like to contact the LNRS team at Shropshire Council please email [LNRS@Shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:LNRS@Shropshire.gov.uk).

## Strategic Significance in the Defra Metric

### What is the Strategic Significance Multiplier?

Strategic Significance is defined in the Biodiversity Metric User Guide<sup>1</sup> as ‘The local significance of the habitat based on its location and the habitat type.’

The Strategic Significance Multiplier assigns additional value to habitats which are of local significance within the metric calculation. The multiplier is 1.15 the original habitat value.

This means more habitat units are generated in these areas of local significance, than for exactly the same action in a different location of the same size. This may be a benefit for developers and for landowners involved with habitat banking.

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<sup>1</sup> The Statutory Biodiversity Metric – User Guide (3 July 2025) Defra.  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/689c5ee17b2e384441636196/The\\_Statutory\\_Biodiversity\\_Metric\\_-\\_User\\_Guide\\_-\\_July\\_2025.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/689c5ee17b2e384441636196/The_Statutory_Biodiversity_Metric_-_User_Guide_-_July_2025.pdf)

# Applying Strategic Significance

## Baseline habitats

Now that the LNRS for Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin has been adopted the Strategic Significance of all baseline habitats should be set as ‘low’ in the Biodiversity Metric. This change will have some temporary implications.

The LPA may ask for a Biodiversity Metric baseline to be changed to “low” where it was given as ‘high’ when the planning application was:

- validated before the LNRS was adopted, but not determined until after the LNRS was adopted, or
- approved before LNRS adoption, but the net gain plan condition was not discharged until after adoption.

## Post-development habitats

Now that the LNRS has been adopted post-development Strategic Significance is decided based on location and the measures (actions) identified for that parcel of land. Locations specifically identified as “Core” and “Opportunity” areas have the potential to host actions of “high” Strategic Significance:

### *A. Land not mapped on the LNRS map*

Land not identified on the LNRS map is not considered to be of Strategic Significance and the multiplier within the Metric cannot be applied.

### *B. Land mapped on the LNRS map*

Where land has been identified on the LNRS map the following criteria for Strategic Significance must be applied:

1. Where a parcel of land is partially identified on the map and partially not identified on the map the parcel should be split within the Metric and the correct judgement of Strategic Significance applied to each part.
2. If a parcel of land is identified on the LNRS map, Strategic Significance may be assigned to any proposed post-development habitat improvements that align with LNRS mapped actions.
3. Where a parcel of land is on the LNRS map but the habitat creation and/or enhancement proposed do not deliver the identified mapped actions then Strategic Significance cannot be applied.

### *Strategic Significance and hedgerows*

All actions relating to hedgerows are unmapped within the LNRS. Although hedgerows are of real local importance, as they are equally valuable across much of the area they cannot be meaningfully mapped within the context of this LNRS. As such hedgerow

actions (creation, management or restoration) are not assigned High Strategic Significance anywhere within the LNRS area.

#### *Strategic Significance and watercourses*

Watercourses have been identified as priorities within the LNRS map and have a range of actions associated with them depending upon the geographic location. Proposals delivering LNRS identified actions on mapped watercourses can be assigned High Strategic Significance.

#### *Strategic Significance and nationally and internationally designated sites*

The Strategic Significance Multiplier cannot be applied to activities undertaken on Nationally designated sites (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) or Habitats Sites (Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas or Ramsar sites) in most cases. The appropriate management of these sites, and the maintenance of the designated habitats they contain in good ecological condition, is secured through other regulatory regimes and is outside of the remit of the LNRS.

In rare cases it might be appropriate to apply the Strategic Significance Multiplier to habitat works within a nationally or internationally designated site but not for works which will directly benefit the reasons the site was designated. If this approach is proposed then it should be discussed with the relevant LPA before the planning application, and the supporting documentation, is submitted.

#### *Strategic Significance and locally designated sites*

The Strategic Significance Multiplier applies to locally designated sites (Local Nature Reserves, Local Wildlife Sites and Ancient Woodlands) which are all within the “Core” network where the proposed habitat improvement activities either align with the reasons for designation for the site or are identified as priorities or actions within the LNRS.

#### *Strategic Significance and Irreplaceable habitat*

The Strategic Significance Multiplier applies to Irreplaceable habitats where they occur within the “Core” and “Opportunity” areas identified by the LNRS, where they are outside of nationally and internationally designated sites (see above), and where the proposed habitat improvement activities enhance the condition of the irreplaceable habitat present.

### **Further guidance**

Further guidance on the application of the Strategic Significance Multiplier can be found in the [Defra User Guide](#) or can be sought from the relevant Local Authority Ecology Team.