Urban Greening Factor

**What is an Urban Greening Factor (UGF)?**

UGF is a planning tool and policy framework that evaluates both the quality and quantity of green and blue infrastructure in new developments. The policy (SC13) requires developers to ensure that sites remain green after development. Green and blue infrastructure is used to describe water, plants, trees and soils.

**Why do we want this?**

Hastings Borough Council has declared a housing emergency, a climate emergency and a nature emergency. Increasing the amount of green and blue infrastructure in developments helps address all three.

UGF supports this by:

- Mitigating the effects of climate change, such as urban heating and flood risk
- Creates space for both nature and people
- Ensures that developments not only accommodate nature, but makes it a visible feature of the design

Specific UGF measures, like green roofs, also provide practical benefits:

- They help insulate buildings, reducing heating and cooling costs
- They reduce pressure on our sewer system by collecting rainwater
- They improve solar panel efficiency by keeping panels cooler

**Is it the same as biodiversity net gain?**

No. The UGF is a separate requirement alongside, not instead of, the mandatory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).

**How does it work?**

The UGF tool assigns a score from 0 to 1 for different surface types within a site. Each square metre is given a score, with more natural surfaces achieving higher values. Hard, impermeable surfaces like concrete score 0, whilst the greenest features like mature trees and hedgerow score the maximum value of 1.

The scores for all surfaces across the site are added together, and then divided by site size to give an overall score.

For example, a site with an area of 100 square metres and a total score of 55.6 would achieve a score of 0.56.

**What score does a site need to achieve?**

Housing sites need to achieve a minimum score of 0.4 and employment sites require a minimum of 0.3.

There is one exception. Where a site's existing (undeveloped) condition would achieve a higher score than these minimums, the required development score is adjusted accordingly. For example, a site scoring 0.5 in its undeveloped state would be required to score 0.5 or better once developed.

In all cases, development should not result in a site scoring less than it did in its original condition.

**What has a high score and what has a low score?**

The more natural and biodiverse the feature, the better the score.

High scoring features include:

- Existing trees and hedgerow
- New mature trees
- Wetlands
- Food growing areas and allotments
- Intensive green roofs

Low scoring features include:

- Paving
- Concrete
- Chemically treated water
- Basic green roofs

The easiest way to achieve a high score is by keeping existing high scoring features, and to include more of them in to the finished development.