

Building Research Establishment Method Scheme (BREEAM)

National Planning Policy (Planning Policy Wales, Edition 3, July 2010) now requires that new developments for major nonresidential buildings meet "Very Good" under the BREEAM scheme (a recognised standard designed to improve the overall sustainability of new development under a single framework), and to meet an "Excellent" standard for reducing Carbon Emissions (carbon index of 40). Major means a building with either a floorspace of 1000m² or more or a site with an area of 1 hectare or more.

The points below expand on the Welsh Assembly Government's requirements to move towards more sustainable and Zero Carbon buildings in Wales as required by Technical Advice Note (TAN) 22 and Planning Policy Wales.

This note is intended to be read in conjunction with Planning Policy Wales Technical Advice Note 12: Design and the Welsh Assembly's Design and Access Statements (DAS) Interim Guidance. The following sets out the minimum level of information required as part of a valid DAS in the submission of a formal application or pre-application discussions.

BREEAM

The Scheme measures the sustainability performance of a building against the 10 design categories detailed below:

- 1) Management
- 2) Health and well-being
- 3) Energy
- 4) Transport
- 5) Water
- 6) Materials
- 7) Waste
- 8) Land use and ecology
- 9) Pollution
- 10) Innovation

Credits are awarded under subheadings in each design category according to performance. These credits are then added together and weighted to produce a single overall score on a scale of Pass, Good, Very Good, Excellent and Outstanding.

To achieve Very good a minimum score of 55% is required together with specified minimum standards in certain areas.

Reduction in Carbon Emissions

In addition to this, Planning Policy Wales has increased the minimum reduction in carbon emissions to an "Excellent" standard for reducing Carbon Emissions (CO₂ index-EPC rating of 40). This element is assessed through the Scheme under the Energy design category subheading Ene1. To achieve a reduction in carbon emissions the design should look to implement the energy hierarchy (see figure 1). This approach can assist in achieving Low and Zero Carbon (LZC) energy sources.

The BREEAM guidance includes assessor manuals for the following types of buildings: Courts, Education, Industrial, Healthcare, Prisons, Offices, Retail, and Multi-residential. There is also a method for assessing buildings falling outside these categories.

Application Requirements - What your Design and Access Statement must include:

Pre-application discussion stage:

- It is recommended that a potential development site be registered and that a BREEAM assessor is appointed;
- A pre-assessment summary. The pre-assessment summary should provide detail on how credits will be achieved under each of the 10 BREEAM design categories;*
- Detail within preliminary DAS describing how meeting the Scheme requirements has affected the potential layout and design;
- Initial details/information on how the design will achieve the required reduction in carbon emissions, taking into account the principles of the energy hierarchy.**

Outline Applications:

- BREEAM assessor details and the site registration number;
- A detailed pre-assessment summary. Although matters relating to layout and appearance may be reserved, the pre-assessment summary is required to demonstrate that achieving a Very Good rating under the Scheme for the site and scheme is feasible; *
- Detail within DAS describing how meeting the Scheme requirements has affected the potential siting, design, scale, layout etc;
- A statement within the DAS on how the design will achieve an "Excellent" standard for reducing Carbon Emissions (CO2 index- EPC rating of 40). This statement should take into account the principles of the energy hierarchy. If LZC energy sources are proposed a summary of the LZC feasibility study should be submitted. **

*It is expected that some elements of the pre-assessment may change from the pre-application and outline stage to the reserved matters/full application stage and any changes should be charted within the DAS.

** If Low and Zero Carbon energies are to be used, a LZC Energy Feasibility Study should be conducted as it can score additional credits within the scheme. The feasibility study should be prepared by an independent energy specialist and be carried out at the earliest stage prior to submission of an application. A summary of the study is required as part of the DAS for an outline, full and reserved matters application (depending on when the study was conducted).

Full applications and Reserved Matters (where outline permission was granted on or after 1 September 2009)

- BREEAM assessor details and the site registration number;
- A detailed pre-assessment summary that demonstrates how the required standards of meeting a Very Good rating under the scheme have been met or exceeded;
- A clear statement within the DAS on the approach taken to reduce carbon emissions through the implementation of the energy hierarchy: This statement should include:
 - A commitment to a preferred solution
 - Summary of the results from Low and Zero Carbon energy feasibility study - If Low and Zero carbon options are not proposed then explanation as to why
 - Measures taken to use energy more efficiently
 - Measures taken to reduce energy use

- Linkages to the drawings/plans that indicate how and where the solutions have been incorporated.

The BREEAM scheme helps to reduce environmental damage through promoting more sustainable methods of construction and subsequently more sustainable lifestyles. To achieve a Very Good rating means sustainability will be designed into the scheme and this should be evident within the Design and Access Statement.

Following the granting of planning permission the Local Planning Authority will require the submission of an 'Interim Certificate' (design stage), to confirm that a minimum "Very Good" rating will be achieved, and that 6 credits under Ene 1 will be achieved. Further to this and prior to the first occupation of a Scheme building, a 'Final Certificate' (post construction stage) will be required. These aspects will normally be secured through planning conditions

Further information

Welsh Assembly Government
www.wales.gov.uk/planning

Constructing Excellence
www.constructingexcellence.org.uk

Building Research Establishment
www.bre.co.uk

BREEAM
www.breeam.org

Building Regulations
www.communities.gov.uk

The Planning Portal
www.planningportal.gov.uk