

Sustainable Development in Jersey - British Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method ("BREEAM")

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

The Minister for Planning and Environment for the States of Jersey has identified 'sustainable development' [1] as essential to delivering Jersey's development requirements.

The aim is to meet the present needs of the corporate and residential population whilst at the same time minimizing environmental degradation.

With that goal in sight the Minister has taken the step of implementing sustainable development requirements into the planning process for commercial and residential development schemes. For example:

The Jersey Waterfront

'The Jersey Waterfront - Supplementary Planning Guidance' [2] states:

"The built environment is responsible for 45% of all greenhouse gas emissions. It is during the design process where decisions are made which can have the greatest influence on reduction of the impact of the built environment. Buildings for the Waterfront should be able to demonstrate high levels of environmental performance in terms of energy efficiency ... Developments should be encouraged to achieve an "excellent" or at least "Good" certification under the BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method)".

Review of the Island Plan to rezone land for life-long retirement dwellings and first time buyer homes

The Consultation Report states that when considering schemes for development the Minister will have regard to the criteria that homes are to be designed to reduce the dwelling CO2 emission rate and comply with BREEAM - ECOHOMES 'Very Good' or 'Excellent' standard, at the Ministers discretion.

The introduction of BREEAM targets under the planning process has a significant impact on the build project from conception through to delivery and occupation. This

affects not only developers and the base building but also corporate occupiers [3] fitting out premises.

What is BREEAM?

BREEAM [4] (British Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) is the world's most widely used environmental assessment method for buildings.

It sets the standards for best practice in sustainable development and demonstrates a level of achievement – PASS, GOOD, VERY GOOD or EXCELLENT.

How does BREEAM work?

BREEAM assesses the performance of buildings in the following areas:

- **Management** : overall management policy, commissioning site management and procedural issues
- **Energy use** : operational energy and carbon dioxide (CO2) issues
- **Health and well-being** : indoor and external issues affecting health and well-being
- **Pollution** : air and water pollution issues
- **Transport** : transport-related CO2 and location related factors
- **Land use** : greenfield and brownfield sites
- **Ecology** : ecological value, conservation and enhancement of the site
- **Materials** : environmental implication of building materials, including life-cycle impacts
- **Water** : consumption and water efficiency

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Developers and designers are encouraged to consider these issues at the earliest opportunity to maximise their chances of achieving a high BREEAM rating.

Credits are awarded in each area according to performance. A BREEAM certificate is then issued for the development according to the development's overall BREEAM rating.

How is BREEAM used?

Developers, funders, development agencies and planners use BREEAM to specify the sustainability performance of their buildings in a way that is visible in the market place.

To this end, the BREEAM certified rating of a building's environmentally sustainable performance is often used for property promotional purposes.

What kind of developments can BREEAM be applied to?

BREEAM covers a range of building types:

- Office buildings
- Residential housing
- Light industrial units, warehouses and workshops
- Retail outlets and shopping malls
- Sheltered homes (i.e. nursing homes and student accommodation)
- Schools
- Courts
- Prison accommodation

Does BREEAM impose post-constructive obligations on the owner of a building?

The UK-Green Building Council [5] ("UK-GBC") recently held a workshop to discuss BREEAM. During that discussion it was identified that because BREEAM is based purely upon the design of a building it does not as yet impose post-constructive obligations on owners and occupiers to achieve ongoing sustainable building targets.

However, property investors and developers looking to impose post-constructive sustainable building obligations on occupiers of commercial properties (i.e. corporate tenants) are able to do so by entering into contractual arrangements to that affect.

CONCLUSION

With the current political agenda aimed at sustainable development for the Island, and with the introduction of BREEAM targets under the planning process, developers, investors, corporate occupiers and other stakeholders need to be well advised in the delivery of property projects from conception through to delivery and occupation.

Appendix

[1] 'Sustainable development' is a socio-ecological process characterised by the fulfillment of human needs while maintaining the quality of the natural environment indefinitely.

[2] April 2006

[3] See our separate note on 'Corporate Relocation Projects and Pre-Let Agreements'.

[4] The BRE Group is a leading research, consultancy, training, testing and certification organisation delivering sustainability and innovation across the built environment.

[5] The UK-GBC is an industry led, independent, not-for-profit, membership based organisation whose mission is to dramatically improve the sustainability of the built environment by radically transforming the way it is planned, designed, constructed, maintained and operated. <http://www.ukgbc.org>.

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