

The case for BREEAM Communities

“As a local authority planner, my life is made so much easier if a developer chooses to use BREEAM Communities.”

Louise Cutts, Development Management Officer, Eastleigh Borough Council



Image: Media City

BREEAM Communities is a way to improve, measure and certify the social, environmental and economic sustainability of the plans for large-scale developments by integrating sustainable design into the masterplanning process.

There are a range of benefits for developers, local authorities and other masterplanning professionals from using BREEAM Communities. It significantly improves the process of stakeholder engagement on large developments, smoothing out the planning process and reducing associated costs. It also provides a credible and transparent means of measuring and defining sustainability at the neighbourhood scale, differentiating the site and demonstrating alignment with National Planning Policy Framework policies.

This document further highlights the benefits of BREEAM Communities, including feedback from numerous stakeholders who have had experience of using the scheme.

Creating sustainable places

BREEAM Communities supports the creation of more sustainable places by providing design teams with a simple framework to consider sustainability. The scheme supports engagement with the community and key stakeholders at the earliest possible stages, optimising the opportunity for the integration of sustainable design. Design teams have reported that using BREEAM Communities brought about a variety of sustainability benefits including:

- More sustainable, safe and well integrated transport infrastructure
- Enhanced economic activity in the local area
- Vibrant public space, with well integrated green infrastructure and high quality landscaping
- Reduced energy and water demand, in turn reducing operational costs
- Optimal provision of facilities, amenities and utilities

"Using a defined set of criteria for the creation of sustainable communities means that it is more likely that these are properly considered and sustainable designs are realised."

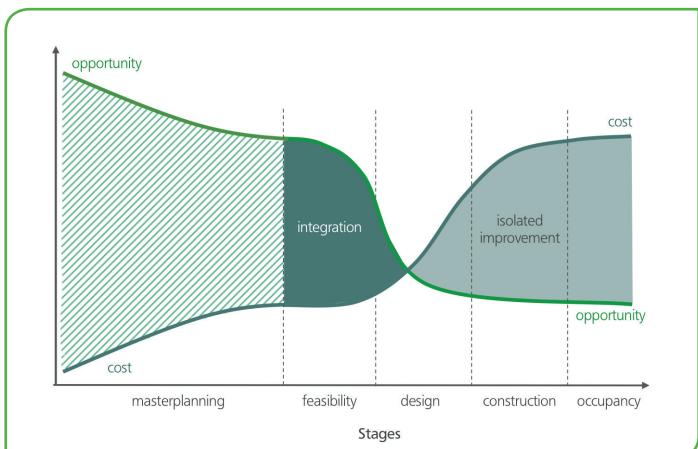
Ross Peedle Architect, John Thompson & Partners

Saving time and money

BREEAM Communities saves money and time by:

- Promoting early consideration of sustainable opportunities and challenges, thus ensuring that they are addressed with cost effective solutions
- Using site-wide design approaches or technical solutions that result in economies of scale. For example energy technologies, drainage systems, materials, etc.
- Reducing long-term costs related to: security, flooding, transport infrastructure and social sustainability issues such as public health and fuel poverty, through good design

- Smoothing out and reducing costs in the planning process, by front loading stakeholder engagement, resulting in a smoother and more efficient planning process
- Increasing the long term value of the area, promoting higher sale and rental prices



Maximising potential and reducing costs: By considering sustainable design earlier in the masterplanning process there are greater opportunities to implement effective sustainable solutions at a lower cost. BREEAM Communities operates in the masterplanning stage where this opportunity is greatest.

"[BREEAM] Communities created a halo over the MediaCity. ... It saves us money in the long run to have these buildings on a sustainable footprint."

Iain Taylor, Partnerships Director, Peel Group

"BREEAM Communities encapsulates our strategic approach to development. We regard the assessment process as cost neutral as it helps smooth out the planning process and demonstrates the high quality we would be seeking to achieve."

Dave Bullock, Compendium Living's Managing Director

Improving the planning process

BREEAM Communities gives developers and local authorities a clear framework to demonstrate sustainability of a development proposal. Both parties know what to expect and can easily measure the sustainability outcomes and successes of the development.

"It is actually incredibly easy and it does provide a lot of certainty to developers, in terms of what we as planners are trying to achieve."

Louise Cutts, Development Management Officer, Eastleigh Borough Council

The scheme will aid pre-application discussions, bringing them to the forefront in the early stages of the project, thus improving efficiency and reducing the likelihood of the need to rework designs.

"Overall it [BREEAM Communities] helped us secure planning approval and it helped us secure the project."

Dave Bullock, Managing Director, Compendium Living

In the UK BREEAM Communities helps to demonstrate that a development proposal satisfies local policies, and the National Planning Policy Framework. This is particularly useful in the case of the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'.

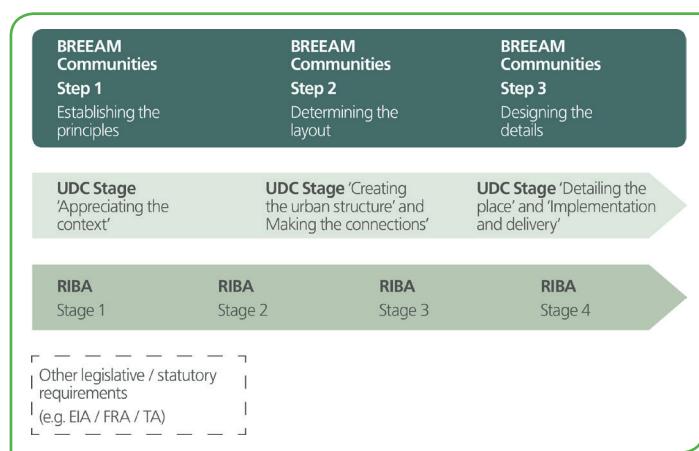
"Not only does it [BREEAM Communities] halve the time that I spend ... before I get to committee, but more importantly it seems to provide both a guarantee and an accreditation that a development will be sustainable as defined in the NPPF, which at the end of the day is what we all want."

Louise Cutts, Development Management Officer, Eastleigh Borough Council

Improving project management

Feedback to date suggests that BREEAM Communities reduces the amount of work involved in the masterplanning process. It is a framework to facilitate good planning, with most of the mandatory requirements being studies that developers are already required to complete for projects of a significant size, for example, an Environmental Impact Assessment.

The scheme ensures these studies are undertaken at the right time, bringing together and making use of the evidence from these studies to identify what can be done with the unique issues and opportunities on the site.



BREEAM Communities complements other masterplanning processes. Rather than adding work, it provides a holistic framework to build on what is already being done.

"BREEAM Communities is a planning vehicle but it's actually so much more....20% of the value is in the planning and 80% is in the conversation you have about your development, how that team works and how that subsequent development expresses itself."

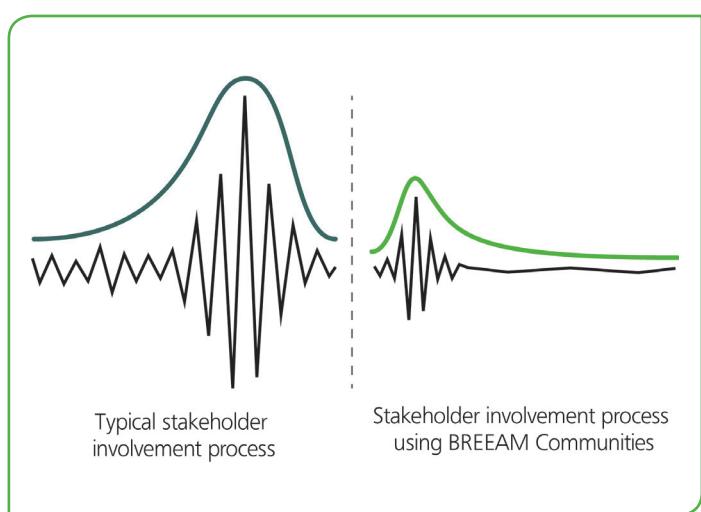
Iain Taylor, Partnerships Director, Peel Group

"BREEAM Communities...will help us to effectively manage and optimise the wide range of complex sustainability issues involved in delivering the project."

Guido Muelenaer Project manager, Blue Gate Antwerp

"This structure... give(s) guidance to the architects, the quantity surveyors, infrastructure professionals to start thinking collaboratively in the right direction. ... We had to be ahead of the curve, and the BREEAM Communities sustainable framework enabled us to do that"

Iain Taylor, Partnerships Director, Peel Group



BREEAM Communities strengthens stakeholder management. Typical stakeholder involvement, in the first phases of the masterplanning process, tends to be relatively limited and carried out in isolation, this can lead to additional work and delays later in the process. BREEAM Communities supports bringing stakeholder involvement to the forefront reducing the need for rework and improving communication and efficiency.

Benefits of certification

BREEAM Communities provides third-party certification that is designed to ensure independence, credibility and consistency. This supports;

- Stakeholder buy in, marketing activities and PR for the development and associated stakeholders
- The communication of the sustainability achievements and benefits of the site and enables international comparability
- A flexible approach, enabling phased certification of developments to account for long timescales and different ownership
- Higher ratings for building level assessments as a result of realising additional sustainability opportunities at this earlier stage and on a wider scale.



Image credit: Kanozi Architects

BREEAM Communities complements BREEAM building level assessments, supporting the achievement of higher building level ratings.

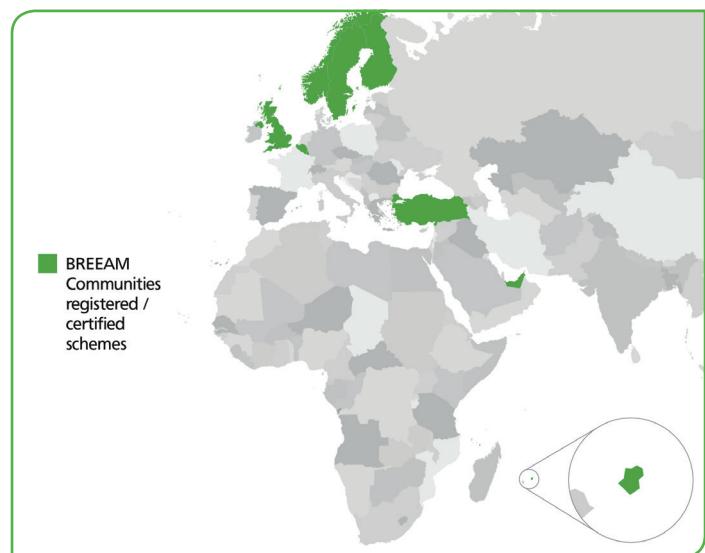
"In effect, what BREEAM Communities seemed to offer was a 3rd party assessment of sustainability which I think is worth an enormous amount especially when you're dealing with controversial planning applications."

Louise Cutts, Development Management Officer,
Eastleigh Borough Council

Facts and figures

BREEAM Communities is being used both within the UK and internationally. This map demonstrates the international uptake of the BREEAM Communities scheme.

To date 9 projects have been certified under BREEAM Communities with a further 18 currently registered and undergoing assessment, with the size of development ranging from 2ha to 179ha (as of the publication date).



Further information about the BREEAM Communities scheme including case studies can be found on the BREEAM Communities UK and International webpages here: www.breeam.org/communities. The following documents are also available to download:

[Introduction to BREEAM Communities](#)

[BREEAM Communities – An introduction for Masterplanners](#)

[BREEAM Communities – An Introduction for International Use](#)

[BREEAM Communities – An Introduction for Local Authorities](#)

[BREEAM Communities FAQs](#)

[BREEAM Communities 2012 Bespoke International Process - Guidance Note GN07](#)

Further information and booking details for BREEAM Communities awareness and assessor courses can be found here: www.bre.co.uk/event-list.jsp

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