

BREEAM Communities 2012

An introduction for master planners

BREEAM Communities helps developers, local authorities and master planning teams improve, measure and certify the sustainability of developments at the neighbourhood scale and beyond.

It covers economic, social and environmental sustainability – assessing issues like housing provision, transport networks, community facilities, and economic impact. BREEAM Communities can help reduce developers' costs and ease the planning process. There is no maximum or minimum size of development to which the scheme applies. BREEAM Communities is useful for developments which are likely to have a significant impact on transport infrastructure, provision of services and utilities, existing local communities or the local environment.

What are the benefits for master planners?

A sustainability standard at the master planning scale is useful for developers, local government and master planning professionals. Consultants and developers who have used the scheme so far have said that it:

- Focuses dialogue between the developer and the local authority, facilitating agreement over what can be achieved on the site
- Ensures that sustainability is considered early in the process saving time and reducing costs
- Provides a level of credibility and transparency to a development proposal
- Helps to improve local authority understanding and ease negotiation on technical issues
- Sets a clear framework for community and stakeholder engagement, allowing positive discussion about the benefits of new communities
- Offers marketing and promotional opportunities for the developer and local authority.

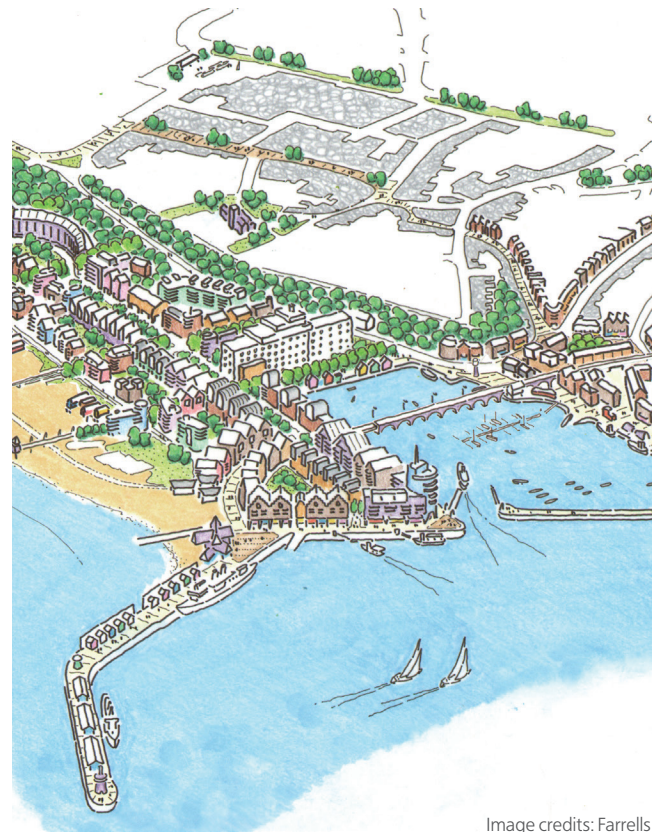
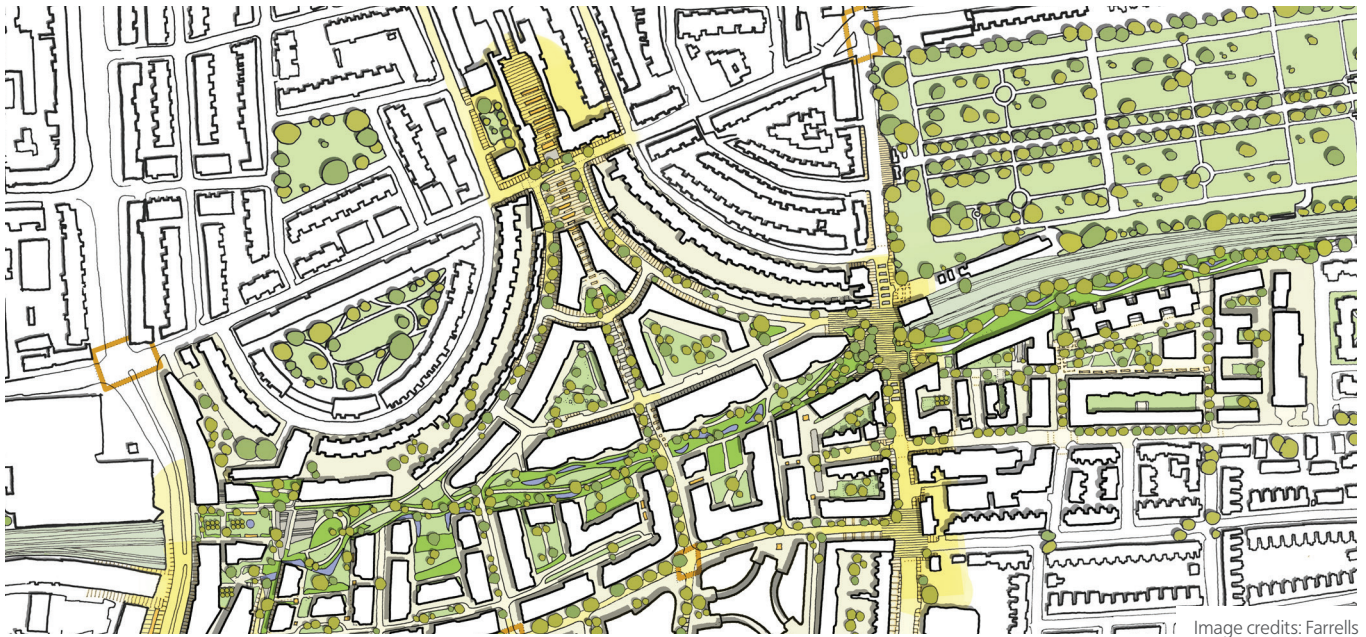


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How does the scheme relate to design?

Good design is incorporated throughout the manual, particularly with regard to the public spaces in the development. BREEAM Communities awards credits for involving the community in design, undergoing a design review and planning for social, economic and environmental change. The scheme is not prescriptive about design. It asks the design team to consider how the unique issues and opportunities on a particular site can be managed and exploited to achieve positive design outcomes for a range of sustainability objectives.



How does the scheme relate to viability?

BREEAM Communities addresses the long-term economic success of a development through the assessment of a number of issues, including: economic impact; demographic needs and priorities; and labour and skills. BREEAM Communities does not set guidelines for the development economics of a site. This is the responsibility of the local authority and the developer, as every development has unique circumstances that determine site level viability.

A consultant's perspective

Sean Nicholson, Technical Director at WSP, says 'BREEAM Communities is about developers and planners working together to achieve the most sustainable outcomes for major sites. It's a solution to help move projects through the planning system and should be welcomed by everyone with an interest in securing sustainable communities.'

An architect's perspective

'...The BREEAM Communities standard for Masthusen provided us with an ideal opportunity to review how we develop sustainable communities in Sweden. For us, BREEAM Communities is the optimal tool for collaboration between authorities and the developer. At the same time it provides the ability to assess a wide range of sustainability issues within the same project. I would recommend all developments undergo such a process.' Anders Nilsson, White Architects, Sweden.

How does the scheme relate to sustainable building standards?

The BREEAM building standards and the Code for Sustainable Homes require detailed information from the design team that shows how the building will perform against a variety of issues, like energy, pollution and health and wellbeing. The assessment criteria in BREEAM Communities consider these issues at the very early stages of design where site-wide solutions can have a big impact. Credits achieved in the BREEAM Communities scheme can be used to support and simplify a building level assessment. Some topics in BREEAM Communities are directly related to building level issues, providing significant value in helping to achieve requirements for sustainable design and construction standards.

Background

BREEAM Communities was originally launched in 2008 and has provided invaluable experience of addressing sustainability at the master plan level. BREEAM Communities 2012 is an updated version that significantly streamlines this methodology focusing on the process of master planning to achieve sustainable outcomes. BRE has updated the scheme based on pilot projects in the UK and Sweden and customer feedback.

Training

There are a number of training and general information sessions available to help you use BREEAM Communities 2012. New assessors can attend a three-day training course to gain an in-depth understanding of the 2012 scheme for use both in the UK and internationally. The first day of this course is also suited to planners, developers and consultants who want an overview of the scheme.

For more information, please visit www.breeam.org/communities or contact breeam@bre.co.uk.