

The Melin approach to BREEAM is always one of understanding and informing. Melin has always taken pride in delivering solutions not problems for clients and never is it more apparent than the approach we take when undertaken sustainability assessments.

Step one – we look at identifying the most appropriate strategy to achieving the required rating and building in a healthy 'buffer' of credits should unforeseen circumstances mean that the goal posts change as the scheme develops.

Step two – we look to identify an appropriate strategy to achieving the required rating without compromising the aspirations of the design or incurring unnecessary costs.

Step three – we consider the overall sustainability of the project considering social and economic perspectives as well as environmental impacts. In conjunction with the design team and the client, if required Melin would be able to assist on Life Cycle Analysis and review the overall embodied energy of material choices.

From the outset we actively encourage greater stakeholder engagement during the assessment process to benefit the building, its users and its impact on the environment. We try to make the process less 'tick-box' and more inclusive whereby responsibility is understood, benefits are mutual and the end result is a sustainable building we can all be proud of.

We regard BREEAM as a yardstick for measuring a building's sustainability, rather than a design tool. We believe that a considered sustainable building design will inform the assessment, rather than the opposite.

BREEAM has been well utilised in Wales in recent years, and with this our understanding has grown. Melin has the experience of the most effective and efficient routes to achieving the highest ratings and were the assessors of the first 'Outstanding' rated primary school in Wales.

All our projects which require formal certification start with a pre-assessment workshop. This enables all the relevant parties to discuss all the available credits, and come to an agreement on those that will be targeted through the Design and Post

Construction stages. We typically target approximately a 10% margin of error or a buffer beyond the threshold for a required rating; this allows an element of manoeuvrability later in the project.

We encourage BREEAM to be retained as a meeting agenda throughout the project to completion and, where appropriate, use third party on-line tools and evidence trackers to allow open access to all members of the design team to monitor the assessment's progress and keep track of outstanding actions.

### How we enhance projects

On each project, we seek to maintain continuity by retaining the same set of team members working on a project from beginning to end. The benefits are that the Melin point of contact remains consistent, so any queries arise on a project, the Design team are aware that there is a specific team member who can assist. This approach also ensures that the input is consistent and considers the implications of the input on the wider project team.

Melin team members attend monthly team meetings which provide a platform to facilitate the sharing of best practice and lessons learned on projects as well as disseminating information on changes to regulations and legislation that could potentially impact our services.

As with any successful organisation, we are committed to continuously improving our service and ensuring lessons are learned from each project we have the benefit of being involved with. Internal team meetings are held monthly to facilitate the sharing of best practice as well as disseminating information on changes to regulations and legislation that could potentially impact our services.

In regard to performance management, Melin's lead assessor oversees the position of all assessments to ensure that each project is on track to achieve certification in line with the projects' programme. All BREEAM assessments we undertake are subject to a stringent quality assurance procedure by the BRE. However, Melin operate an internal quality assurance system to ensure that the reports and corresponding project evidence is correct prior to issue to the BRE. This can avoid potential delays to the Client where the BRE auditor could potentially raise a query relating to a specific area of the assessment, resulting in the issue of the BREEAM certificate being held up.

Strong communication with all project stakeholders is a cornerstone to any successful project. The early appointment of Melin as assessors enables the most efficient and cost effective route to achieving BREEAM certification to be identified and taken forward by the design team. In addition to attending frequent design meetings, Melin provide frequent 'Credit Trackers' to enable the Client and all concerned to be kept abreast of project progress. For larger projects, we have the option to utilise the Tracker Plus on-line BREEAM management tool.

Melin are licensed to operate this system and currently have a number of projects using the system, the design team have the benefit of being able to better manage their flow of information to the Melin Assessor, and well as the Client being able to view a 'snap shot' of the projects progress at any given time.

### A few more reasons to use Melin

Melin Consultants' headquarters are located in Wales, where fifty percent of our staff are Welsh speakers.

Melin are an innovative and forward thinking company; we are always looking for new ways to improve and enhance the service provision that we offer our clients. We consider ourselves to be experts in the area of Part L compliance and sustainability assessments for the built environment in the form of BREEAM and Code for Sustainable Homes.

BREEAM is a significant part of our business, but as a company we are aware of the wider picture of sustainability. For example we are qualified as 'Passivhaus' Designers. The Passivhaus standards strengths lie in the simplicity of its approach; construct a building that has an excellent thermal performance, exceptional airtightness with mechanical ventilation.

To enhance our service provision in the area of the air permeability testing, we have recently invested significantly in thermal imaging equipment. Our Testing Engineers are currently undergoing training to enable us to be able to offer this service to our Clients. This investment will address issues in new and existing buildings concerning thermal bridging. Thermographic testing can assist BREEAM Assessment performance, so as an organisation we can add further value to the BREEAM process by offering guidance on additional associated services.