HOARE LEA
A TETRA TECH COMPANY

BREEAM UK NC V7.
A significant shift in how sustainability is assessed.

SUSTAINABILITY GROUP
SEPTEMBER 2025





No.1 St Michael's, Manchester
As Sustainability Champion, we delivered the NABERS 5* rating and BREEAM Outstanding certification for 186,000sqft of new workspace in central Manchester. The former police station has been upgraded and extended to meet industry-leading performance standards.

Welcome Building, Bristol
As part of a multi-disciplinary appointment, we were embedded in the design team from stages 2-6, securing a BREEAM Outstanding rating and helping the team to win the Unlock Net Zero Award 2025 New Development of the year.

Photo: Ben Dale

BREEAM UK NC V7.
Our overview of the changes.

At a glance.

Largest change in BREEAM criteria since 2011.

Major updates to 20 credits.

Buildings using fossil fuels in operation will be limited to an Excellent rating.

Heat pumps do not count as a low/zero carbon energy generation technologies.

New minimum standards for achieving 'Excellent' and 'Outstanding' ratings across carbon, water, refrigerants and daylighting.

New BREEAM platform, to support the delivery of V7 assessments.

What's new in BREEAM V7?

BREEAM V7 not only updates the methodology behind individual credits but also marks a significant shift in how sustainability is assessed. Whereas previous versions focused largely on design intent, V7 places greater emphasis on measured or predicted performance outcomes. This aligns with evolving regulatory and compliance practices, and leverages advancements in digital assessment tools and availability of data. The further ESG alignment in V7 highlights BREEAM's growing role not just as a design framework, but as a robust investment tool that offers assurance to regulators, occupiers, and investors.

Find out more about Hoare Lea's experienced assessors and BREEAM APs on page 4.

BREEAM UK NC V7.
Key changes by theme.



Energy and carbon.
Shifts energy assessment towards performance metrics, efficient systems, technologies and flexible energy demand strategies.



Materials and waste.
Greater focus on promoting Whole Life Carbon and circular economy principles.



Water.
Simplifies water consumption calculations and introduces benchmarks based on actual use and occupancy.



Land-use and ecology.
Reduce the use of high embodied carbon materials and consider natural or renewable materials.



Pollution.
Encourages fossil fuel-free developments and introduces minimum requirements for refrigerants.



Management.
Alignment to the EU taxonomy and promotion of Zero Transition Plans.

What will be the impact?
New minimum standards for ‘Excellent’ and ‘Outstanding’ ratings will set the bar, driving the industry towards performance-led approaches. The new changes will likely make scoring the same rating more challenging, although we anticipate that strategies will adapt. This may have a cost implication as more specialist input and modelling will be required, however this may be offset by the improved performance of the asset, rationalisation of some credits and removal of outdated processes.

BREEAM UK NC V7 changes.
What are the drivers?

Industry alignment.

There is improved coherence across all areas to different BREEAM schemes and international sustainability frameworks. The updates aim to align with the EU Taxonomy, GRESB, and CRREM, making it more relevant for investors and clients seeking demonstrable ESG performance.

Alignment with:
BREEAM In-use
GRESB
EU taxonomy
CRREM

Performance.

Focus shifts on several themes from design intentions to verified performance. The framework places greater emphasis on real-world outcomes, in areas such as operational energy use, embodied carbon, and water consumption. This reflects a broader industry move toward accountability and net zero targets, encouraging early-stage modelling and data-driven decision-making.

Alignment with:
NABERS
UK Net Zero Carbon Building Standard

Whole life thinking and circular economy.

There is a greater focus on assessing environmental impact across the full lifecycle of a building. This is achieved through the enhanced Life Cycle Assessment requirements and new carbon benchmarks, alongside greater alignment with circular economy principles in waste credits. This aligns with regulatory requirements already introduced by local authorities such as the Greater London Authority (GLA).

Alignment with:
The London Plan, March 2021
RICS Professional Standard (whole life carbon assessment for the built environment)

Environment and pollution.

Requirements are tightened around environmental impact and pollution, with more stringent standards on refrigerants, stronger controls on air and water pollution, and clearer links to biodiversity and flood risk. There is also a bigger push for fossil fuel-free buildings, better surface water management, and alignment with biodiversity net gain principles This is aimed at reducing harm to the local environment and supporting long-term ecological resilience.

Alignment with:
DEFRA
Environment Act 2021
Schedule 14

Health and wellbeing.

Social and human aspects also take a more prominent role, with refined criteria around daylight, air quality, acoustics, and non-visual effects of lighting. These updates aim to support more occupant centred design and ensure indoor environments contribute positively to comfort and productivity, reflecting rising commercial focus on these areas.

Alignment with:
EU taxonomy

Summary of major credit changes – See appendix A

Sustainability industry pioneers. Hoare Lea can help you.

Environmental sustainability sits at the heart of our firm's influence on the built environment. We have been delivering BREEAM at all levels on projects since 1990.

We have 14 licensed BREEAM assessors, supported by a team of over 100 sustainability professionals, with specialist skills in sustainability and environmental design complimented by a proven track record of delivering BREEAM certification across a multitude of projects.

BREEAM Accredited Professionals (APs).

Our BREEAM APs draw on real project experience to optimise the scoring strategy in support of the client's ambitions. We collaborate with the team to understand the project drivers and identify where BREEAM can add the most value.

493
Certified projects

23
Outstanding

200
Excellent

14
Licensed BREEAM assessors

A multi-disciplinary offer.

MEP Design
- Optimising HVAC systems to maximise credits inc. refrigerants to lower GWP
- BREEAM specification clauses

Air Quality
- Indoor Air Quality Plans
- Advice on ventilation pathways
- Integrate good air quality into the design

Security
- Security Needs Assessments
- Engineering-led, risk-based, threat-informed systems approach to provide clients with a fully coordinated design

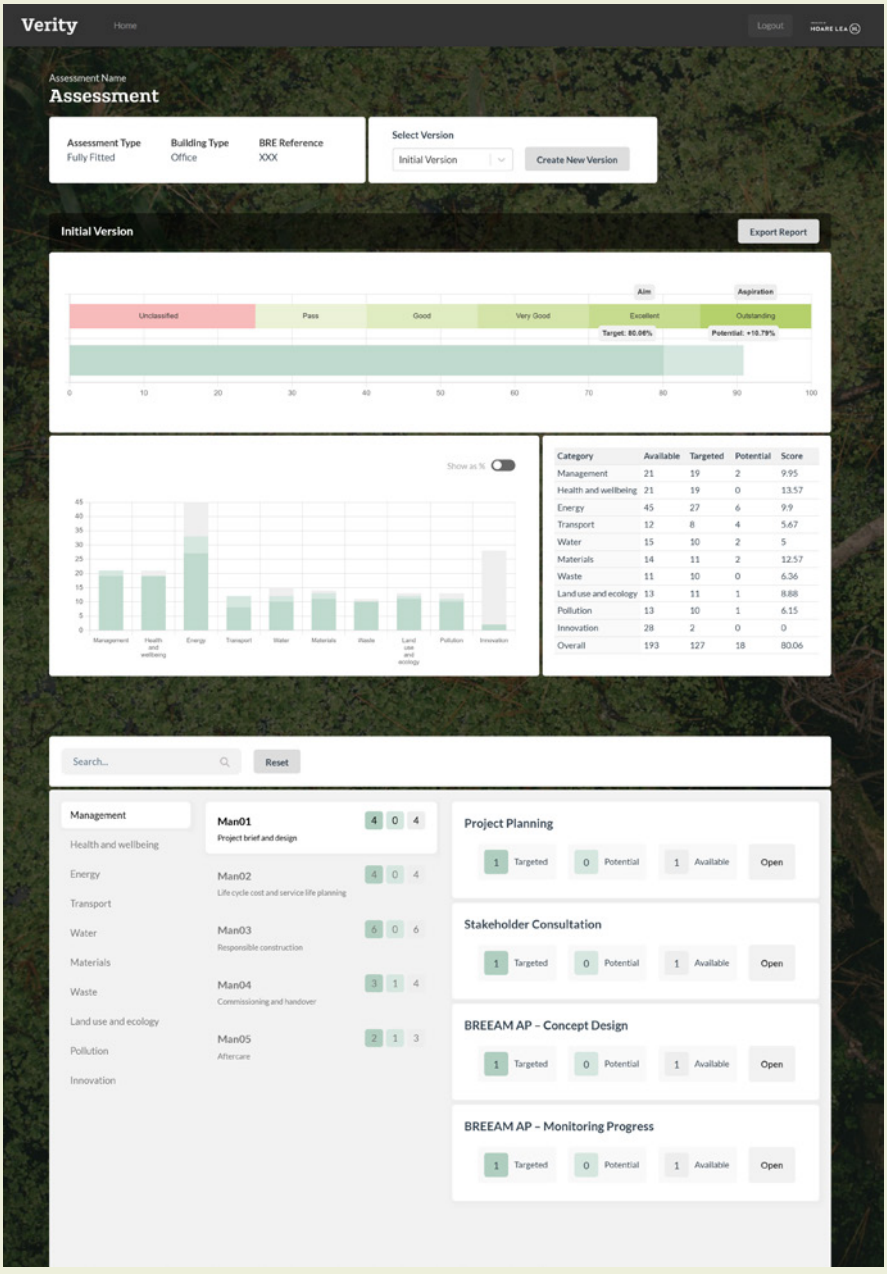
Acoustics
- Optimise sound insulation, indoor ambient noise levels and room acoustics
- Surveying, design and commissioning

Whole Life Carbon
- Passive Design Analysis
- Low/zero carbon feasibility studies
- Calculation of energy performance
- Prediction of Operational Energy
- Identifying energy efficient systems
- Thermal comfort assessments
- Lifecycle analysis to identify carbon hotspots and help clients meet targets
- Third party verification
- Sustainable Procurement Plans

Vertical Transport
- Optimised lift design to achieve energy and carbon savings in operation

Lighting
- Daylight analysis
- Visual performance and comfort delivered through careful artificial lighting design and considered occupant controls
- Sensitive lighting design to minimise external pollution

Introducing Verity.
Our collaborative online assessment platform.



To assist with the transition to BREEAM V7, we are developing a collaborative online assessment platform that we call 'Verity'.

This is unique to Hoare Lea and allows the design team and assessors to work together to determine the optimum routes to achieve the different ratings for any building type in order to help clients make decisions relating to BREEAM targets.

Verity will allow us to track performance against the BREEAM criteria through a visual and interactive online platform.

At the click of a button, all team members can access the live assessment to check progress and identify their own actions.

Clear and consistent reports can be created at each project stage to support key milestones and maximise scoring.

APPENDIX A

Major credit changes.

Performance.

Ene 01	Energy and carbon performance for regulated energy	– Flexible weighting scale for 3 metrics – Excellent = 4 credits; Outstanding = 6 credits – Additional evidence – As Built EPC	
Ene 02	Prediction of operational energy and carbon	– Separated from Ene 01 – Exemplary credit = Third-party verification of energy models	NEW CREDITS
Ene 04	Low carbon design	– Building form analysis (1 credit) – Fabric performance (2 credits – 5/10%) – Reduced selection of LZCs (biomass caveated) – Heat pumps ineligible	
Ene 05	Energy efficient equipment	– Reworked Ene 08 – Major reconfiguration of credits (5nr) – Alternative method for demonstrating energy efficiency	
Ene 06	Energy efficient systems	– Combines old Ene 03, 05, 06 and 07 – Scope includes: external lighting, cold storage, lifts, escalators, swimming pools, commercial laundry, server cooling systems, but excludes laboratories	
Ene 07	Flexible demand response	– Rewards proportion of fixed systems that can automatically modify their electricity consumption patterns in response to signals from the electricity supplier	NEW CREDITS
Ene 08	Installed controls	– Recognises installed controls that enable building servicing systems to respond more efficiently to the demand for energy services	NEW CREDITS

Whole life thinking and Circular Economy.

Mat 01	Building Life Cycle Assessment (LCA)	– New credits for as-built LCA – 2 credits for comparison against embodied carbon benchmarks for different building types – Submit LCA within 20 working days of submitting planning application – Requirement to report Global Warming Potential (GWP) impacts to clients	
Wst 01	Construction waste management	– Minimum requirement for Outstanding – Pre-Development Audit or Resource Management Plan	

Water.

Wat 01	Water consumption	– Simplification of calculator tool – Benchmarks based on installed items only; calculation doesn't assume their presence in some building types – Revised scoring scale – recycled water use is always recognised – Removal of requirement to assess facilities in neighbouring buildings when none are present in actual	
Wat 04	Water using equipment and systems	– 5 credits available, rather than 1 – Installing efficient systems for unregulated water – Two methods of compliance: demonstrate efficiency compared to a standard version OR meet 'deemed to comply' requirements	
Wat 05	Prediction of operational water use	– Sanitary water use = Wat 01 using expected, not standard, occupancy – Non-sanitary = estimate	NEW CREDITS

Environment and pollution.

LUE 01	Site selection	– Requirement to use ISO 18400 Standard for site investigation	
LUE 02	Ecological risks and opportunities	– Methodology for combined assessment route (1 and 2) – Removed items to place greater emphasis on Suitably Qualified Ecologist (SQE) input	
LUE 04	Enhancing site ecology	– New benchmarks to align with English Biodiversity Net Gain policy – Calculation methodology for sites with no/ low biodiversity baseline based on absolute change in biodiversity units	
Pol 01	Impact of refrigerants	– Minimum standards for BREEAM Excellent and Outstanding – Pre-requisite for all refrigerants to have zero ozone depletion potential	
Pol 02	Local air quality	– More credits for buildings with no on-site combustion (3nr) – Criteria relates to NOx only (VOCs and particulates excluded)	
Pol 05	Reduction in noise pollution	– Noise level criteria now specify that it must be at least 5dB lower than background noise throughout the day	

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Health and wellbeing.

Hea 01	Natural light	– New minimum standard for daylight for BREEAM Outstanding – Exemplary credit for glare control – Daylight simulations encouraged	NEW CREDITS
Hea 02	Artificial light	– Now includes lighting zoning and occupant control – More detailed external lighting requirements	NEW CREDITS
Hea 03	Non-visual effects of light	– New credit on health benefits of lighting	NEW CREDITS
Hea 04	Indoor air quality	– Stricter requirements on construction emissions – Smoking ban within the building	
Hea 05	Thermal comfort	– Adaptive comfort methodology added for buildings with mechanical ventilation with limited comfort cooling	
Hea 06	Acoustic performance	– Separates indoor ambient noise and sound insulation into different credits	

APPENDIX B

FAQs.

When can I register a scheme under V7?
BREEAM V7 registrations will be available later in 2025 following the launch of the new BREEAM assessment platform.

How long do I have to register a V6.1 assessment?
V6.1 registrations will be closed on 27th January 2026.

How long is a V6.1 registration valid for?
In order for a registration to be remain valid, at least one formal submission (design or post construction) will need to be made no more than 5 years following the launch of registrations for the V7 manual.

How will V7 change how we work?
BREEAM is intended to push the industry forward and drive more sustainable development, so we expect the process to be more challenging in some areas, but the reward will be a robust rating based on latest industry thinking and an opportunity to demonstrate market leadership.

Should I update all my registrations to V7?
As V7 is a significant update, adding new criteria and methodologies, if a design team concludes that V7 provides additional value compared to V6.1, all existing registrations can be updated to the V7 criteria (likely, without additional BRE fees).



Aire Park, Leeds
This former Tetley site in the centre of the city, provides the anchor for a new business district which is currently being developed. As BREEAM Assessor and AP, we achieved a BREEAM Excellent rating for the new build office development prior to tenant fit-out and are continuing to work on forthcoming adjacent buildings on the site.

Sky Studios 110, Borehamwood
Shortlisted for the BREEAM New Construction Commercial Award at the 2025 BREEAM awards following our successful Post Construction Review which was certified to Outstanding with a score of 87.8%.

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This document was correct at the time of writing and reflects the BREEAM UK NC V7 information available at that date. BREEAM requirements, guidance and implementation arrangements may be subject to subsequent updates or clarification.

Engineers of human experiences.

Hoare Lea is an award-winning engineering consultancy with a creative team of engineers, designers, and technical specialists. We provide innovative solutions to complex engineering and design challenges for buildings.

Irrespective of the scale or complexity of a project, we provide a full range of MEP, environmental, and sustainability services, bringing buildings to life and ensuring that they perform in operation as well as they look.

HOARELEA.COM

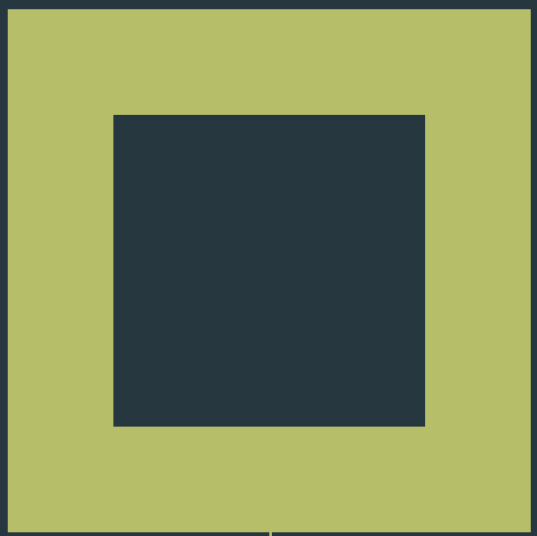
LETS TALK

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