

Element Sustainability – Technical Note

Project: 2024.299
Crowne Plaza
Client: Village Hotels
Date: 23rd February 2026

The purpose of this note is to review the feasible option to achieving a BREEAM rating to satisfy Planning Condition 14 (DN Ref. PL/25/0759), for the new build extension at the Crowne Plaza, Reading.

Condition 14 relates to Reading Borough's Local Planning Policy, which states:

'The development hereby permitted shall not be first occupied until a copy of a Final BREEAM Certificate in accordance with the BREEAM Sustainability Standard following a post-construction stage review carried out by a licensed assessor has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, demonstrating that the development has attained as a minimum a 'Very Good' standard set out in application submission'.

This condition relates to Reading Borough Council's Planning policy CC2, stating:

'All minor non-residential developments or conversions to residential are required to meet the most up-to-date BREEAM 'Very Good' standard as a minimum'

BREEAM New Construction Version 7

Element Sustainability has been made aware of the above BREEAM planning condition for the new build element of the scheme. Currently, the scheme is progressing through the construction phase with handover expected March /April 2026.

The new, more complex and rigorous, version of BREEAM New Construction v7 technical guidance was released November 2025. The new build element of the Crowne Plaza scheme would need to be registered on this methodology, for the extension only.

As the scheme is currently progressing through RIBA Stage 5 (Construction), the following constraints and limitations on the BREEAM assessment have been highlighted:

- RIBA Stage 2/Concept Design Stage (pre-planning), sensitive credits have been missed as the BREEAM requirement has been picked up too late. These early credits can contribute to 20% of the overall BREEAM score, resulting in the required rating being unobtainable.
- Early Design team BREEAM-specific input and reporting requirements will not have been included in the design spec.



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- On-site construction requirements will have to be enforced from the start date on site. This has not been discussed or set up due to the BREEAM requirements, having been discussed mid way through the construction phase.
- Consequently, we consider the BREEAM 'Very Good' rating would now be unfeasible.
- BREEAM V7 New Construction is the latest, more onerous version of the BREEAM new construction methodology. Achieving a BREEAM 'Very Good' rating on this methodology, with the constraints highlighted above, would also result in the conditioned BREEAM rating being unachievable.
- The new build element of the scheme is a circa. 200m² extension to an existing building. It has been highlighted that due to the scale of the proposed extension, achieving a BREEAM New Construction 'Very Good' rating may be considered excessive relative to the scope of works.

BREEAM In Use

Alternatively, BREEAM In-Use (Part 1 Asset Performance) could provide a solution that will satisfy the planning condition, providing a feasible option which is more likely to facilitate the award of a BREEAM certificate.

These certificates are graded Pass / Good/Very Good/Excellent/ Outstanding. Therefore, we can provide a certificate that addresses the wording of the BREEAM condition.

Unlike assessments tied to design or construction phases, BREEAM In-Use (BiU) focuses on how buildings perform day-to-day, and is structured into two parts:

- Asset Performance (Part 1); and,
- Management Performance (Part 2).

Asset Performance (Part 1) assesses the building's performance of physical characteristics, such as fabric, systems and location. This alternative approach may be submitted to the BRE at the time of PC.

The BiU methodology removes the RIBA Stage sensitivity of credits and less onerous on the on-site action for the main contractor.

This approach would optimise the chance of obtaining a BREEAM rating for the scheme. An exercise needs to be carried out to establish the approach and determine the feasibility for the target BREEAM VG rating.

