

# DELIVERING SOCIAL VALUE

TRIBE  
REPORT

SPACEUK

HOST

**Heather Smith**

Heather Smith Commercial

CO-HOSTS

**Imogen Ebbs**

Aviva Investors

**May Molteno**

Trilogy Real Estate

**Sam Monger**

Grosvenor

**David O'Sullivan**

GPE

SUPPORTER

  
**HEATHER SMITH**  
COMMERCIAL

# TRIBE REPORT

The IMPACT Tribe at SPACE UK discuss 'Delivering Social Value'

How social value is understood, demonstrated, communicated and measured is now paramount for landlords and investors. 'The IMPACT Tribe' at SPACE UK discussed the challenges of measurement, the financial imperative and retrofitting social change.

Hosted by Heather Smith, Founder of Heather Smith Commercial, the Tribe was Co-Hosted by GPE's David O'Sullivan, Aviva Investors' Imogen Ebbs, Grosvenor's Sam Monger and Trilogy's May Molteno.

HOST



## Heather Smith

**HSC**  
HEATHER SMITH  
COMMERCIAL

"We help to pinpoint exactly what you want to achieve as a landlord or occupier- and then create a strategy that delivers this. As a niche agency, we get to know our clients well. Our hands-on approach means we become a key extension of your team and gain a clear understanding of your priorities. We like to look at things differently, providing creative solutions alongside more traditional tactics."

CO-HOSTS



**Imogen Ebbs**  
Aviva Investors



**May Molteno**  
Trilogy Real Estate



**Sam Monger**  
Grosvenor



**David O'Sullivan**  
GPE

## The problem of measurement

Social value is a hot topic at the moment, yet, as Heather Smith suggested, there isn't an established "true form of measurement". Now, as various measurement tools emerge, landlords are on the lookout.

"If you're a good landlord and have a strong sense of community, it's happening organically. One of the challenges is how you measure that social impact," Smith tells the Tribe.

Some landlords have a shorter term view but as Smith suggested to the Tribe "change doesn't happen overnight". In order to improve the local environment it's down to human attitudes. It's also important to acknowledge, Smith said, that some of the measures around environmental change and improvement have to have social measures in mind.

"Social value is a big part of the conversation we're having at Aviva," Imogen Ebbs, Head of Funds Management, Private Equity, at Aviva Investors told the Tribe. "We have social value goals at a business level and those goals get put on the funds. We look at the social needs of the asset and the community, then set the strategy." Ebbs echoes Smith's assertion that the challenge is the measurement. "That's where it gets interesting because there are lots of different metrics and they're not consistent."



*"If you're a good landlord and have a strong sense of community, it's happening organically. One of the challenges is how you measure that social impact."*

*Heather Smith*

## Financial imperative

So, investors and developers can set social impact goals, but how do you measure social value in a financial sense? The Tribe agreed that the industry needs to come together and define and develop ideas around social impact, because it leads to better financial value too.

Heather Smith referenced L&G's work in Maidenhead and Staines;

"Social value is already embedded in the local community. It can have a quantifiable impact with shorter voids and increased rents. In a market where employers now have a moral obligation to monitor employee wellbeing and social welfare, they are looking for spaces with existing communities, which echo their ethos. We have had instances where enquiries from our social media pages, showing the events and wellbeing classes held on site, have resulted in new tenants. Or an upcoming annual events programmes have resulted in companies extending their current leases. It's no longer a 'new way of working', but a standard practice to ensure that social value goals within these companies are being aided and encouraged by the building they're in."

"We all know about the green premium, but a social premium is more difficult," Ebbs added.

May Moltano, Head of Sustainability at Trilogy, said "It's about ROI and what it means. It's interesting to distinguish between social impact and social value". Other sectors have done it already, Moltano points out, who works across the Trilogy portfolio ensuring that ESG is embedded in everything they do, from on-the-ground in their assets to the Trilogy corporate strategy. "The social contract is being stretched in the society we're in and I worry about trying to win the debate only in financial terms".

## Do good by doing right

"You do good by doing right," Ebbs said. "That's where we as an industry need to come together and think about it. If investors are not interested in social value and impact they will get left behind".

Of course, during the planning process there are policies put in place that you consult, added delegate Izzy Scrubby, Assistant Development Manager at the progressive developer Hub Residential. "But often the developer that gets planning will hand the building over to another occupier or [building] manager. But you have to carry those policies through – that's key."

Rebekah Paczek, Director of Public Affairs and Community Relations at Earl's Court development, suggested that "there's a risk that you try and quantify social impact so much that you start to undermine it". Paczel's described the huge amount of "sentiment tracking" at the Earls Court site, and the value that's providing.

INVESTORS

"If investors are not interested in social value and impact they will get left behind"

*Imogen Ebbs*

## Local needs

May Moltano added that "you have to look at where the development is and the needs and opportunities in the local area. The possibility of social impact is so great. How do you measure pride in an area? The only way to do it is to chat to people now and ask them how they feel and then a few years later ask the same people 'how do you feel now?'"

The levers to pull are very different, Moltano explains. "We're privately owned and we can take a long term view. We own a mix of property in a neighbourhood and that gives us lots of different levers. Sometimes the challenge is different and sometimes people want different things in a place".

There are indeed social value factors developers can standardise, but as Moltano states, "It's more of a menu than a fully standardised approach".

Sarah Canning, Founder at Property Marketing Strategists, detailed a survey they'd undertaken of students in the community. "We found students feel quite insulated. They want to work and volunteer in the local community. They want to take part in local sports teams. They want independent shops and F&B. You have to include young people in local value and build social value".

## Retrofitting social change

Heather Smith turned the conversation to what she described as “retrofitting social change”. “There is lots of talk about retrofitting space so it’s suitable for EPCs, but people are not taking into account that other social value changes are needed. There are some great asset managers, investors and portfolio directors out there who want to see social change”.

“One of the things that makes London unique is the juxtaposition of wealth and poverty living cheek by jowl with each other,” said Daivd O’Sullivan, Director of Occupier & Property Service at GPE. “I see London changing and not for the better. Every new apartment development is a ‘luxury development’. I long for the day when someone puts up a sign that says ‘ordinary development’. When I consider what social value is it’s about providing opportunity for everybody. A city-scape that provides for everybody.”

Sam Monger, who heads Grosvenor’s ‘Project Hart’; a new initiative looking to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and young people and their families by providing ‘high-quality affordable homes alongside support services’, added; “We want people to be part of a community that’s going to help them. We’re adopting a piloting approach. We have one street in Chester where we are creating a ‘matching panel’ to make sure we get the right people into the homes who we can support. Some of the homes are for care leavers and some are for people who have suffered domestic abuse, etc. We are keeping a third of the homes for market rents. We are testing and measuring as we go along”.

## Asset-based community development

May Moltano asked the Tribe if they’ve come across the concept of ‘asset-based community development’. Instead of looking at problems in a local community, she explains, you look at the resources and strengths and how you can build those.

Rebekah Paczek adds that “Both of the local authorities in our development area are engaged in the social/community action piece. We’ve got some senior councillors who are really focused, engaged and interested. That’s one of the privileges and advantages of being a single site developer. It’s different if you’re looking for a site to build and sell on”.

Smith concluded by endorsing a sharing mentality...

“Currently, social value among property in real estate is still widely unmeasured, however, it does present us with an incredible learning and listening opportunity. Like anything when it comes to the study of people, influence, contentment and furthermore quantifying it; there will have to be a period of listening hard, sharing findings and learning from our peers. We now have a new, incredibly important opportunity in property that we as a sector get to explore, which has the interest of the future of working at it’s heart.”

---

“We now have a new, incredibly important opportunity in property that we as a sector get to explore, which has the interest of the future of working at it’s heart.”

Heather Smith