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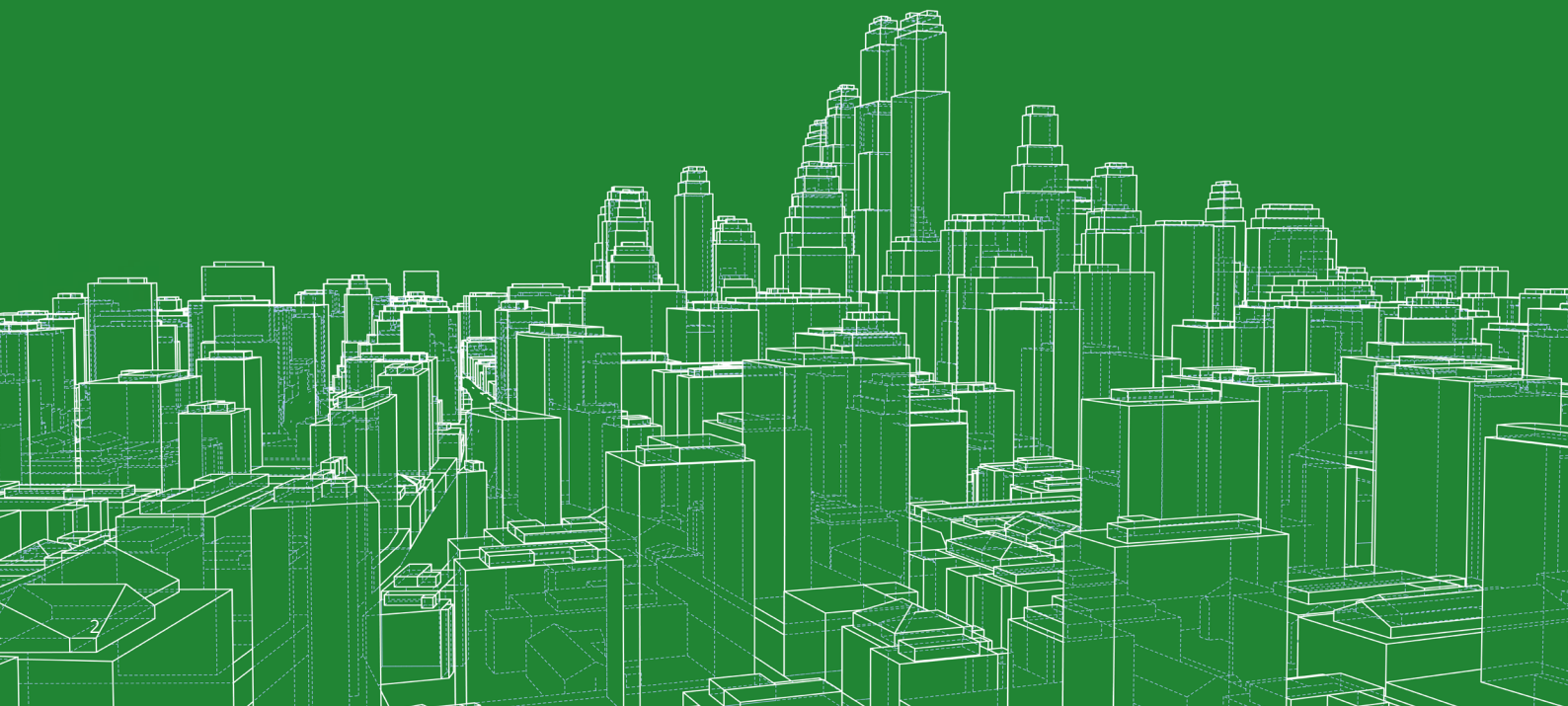


**Social Value and Technology  
in New UK Communities:  
Insights and Opportunities**

# Introduction

The UK's housing deficit of 6.5 million homes<sup>1</sup> represents a wake-up call for the real estate industry, and not only for new buildings. It also calls for leaders to build communities that prioritize social value, wellbeing and resilience.

Technology is now central to all stages of the development lifecycle, and can help you both accelerate delivery and ensure social needs are met. This article outlines how strategic adoption of recent innovations can help you build sustainable, future-proof communities.



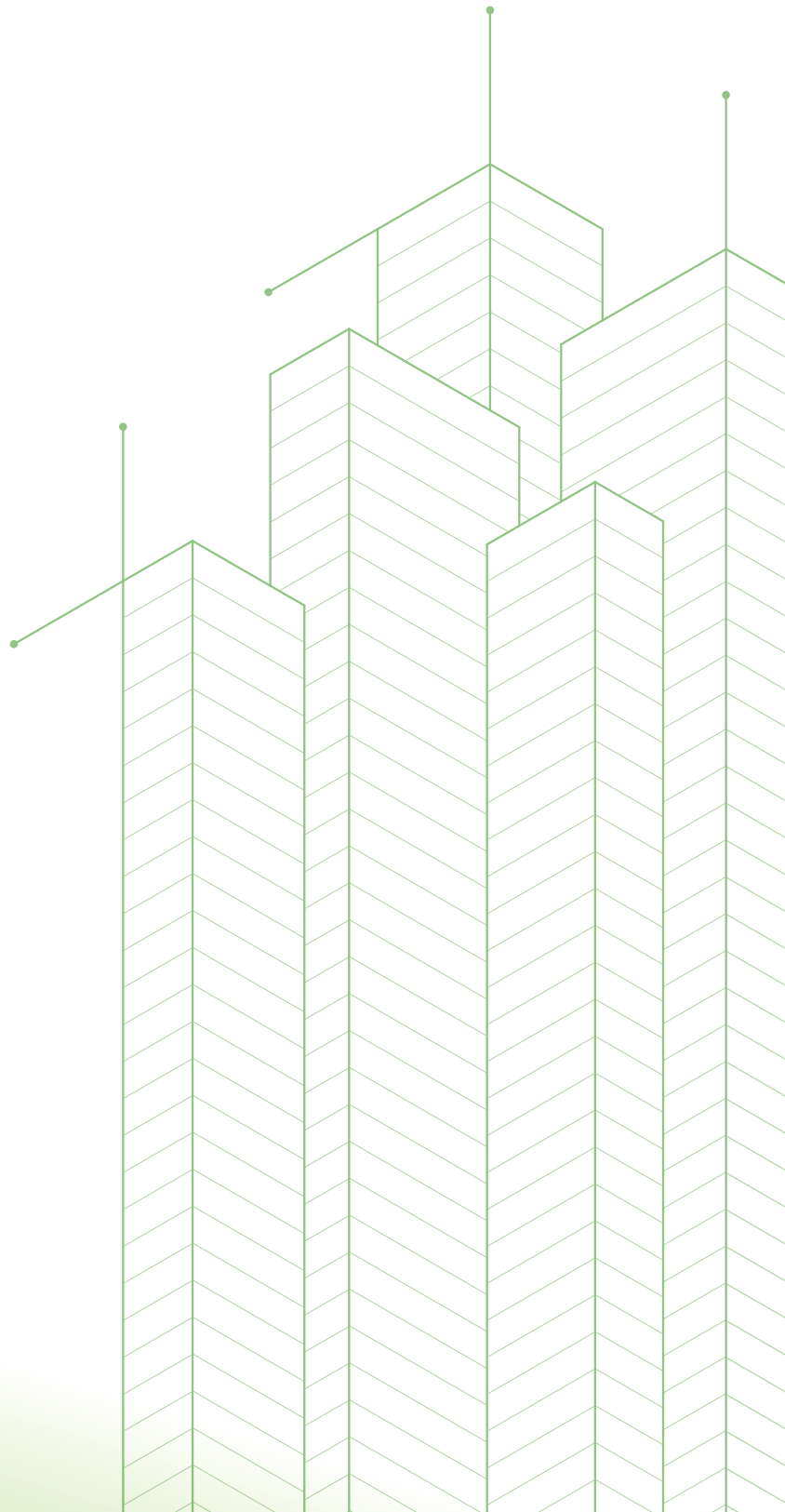


## Technology in Design: Laying the Foundations for Social Value

Social value ambitions are set at the design stage, for which community engagement platforms (e.g. Yemetech<sup>2</sup>, Commonplace<sup>3</sup>) can be used to support inclusive, data-driven consultation. In Southwark, for instance, Commonplace was used for targeted outreach and mobile surveys of elderly and social housing residents, to include underrepresented voices in shaping plans<sup>4</sup>. Such tools enable masterplans to reflect genuine local needs – like green spaces, schools, and libraries – and align with the National Planning Policy Framework’s (NPPF) goal of “healthy, safe and inclusive” developments<sup>5</sup>.

Deloitte’s Living Masterplan, an AI-enabled accelerator, integrates social value metrics – such as access to public transport, affordable housing, local employment, and health facilities – into scenario modelling. This enables layouts to be visualized rapidly and optimized for wellbeing, connectivity and sustainability, helping developments deliver measurable benefits to communities.

This matters. Deloitte’s State of the State report<sup>6</sup> indicates that 47% of respondents feel that improved health and wellbeing are essential factors for improving the UK’s economic growth.





## Technology in Delivery: Accelerating Impact and Inclusion

Technology can help you streamline construction and boost social value. Building Information Modelling<sup>7</sup> (BIM) and digital twins<sup>8</sup> enable real-time collaboration and transparent reporting, using dashboards to track new jobs, apprenticeships, carbon savings and local sourcing. These tools could also help make public-private partnerships more efficient, by giving all parties easy access to real-time data, to support decision-making and, ultimately, faster delivery. Innovations like 3D printing and AI tools can further reduce build times and costs, accelerating the delivery of affordable housing.

Deloitte's London Office Crane Survey<sup>9</sup> has identified protracted supply chains as one reason why only 60-70% of forecasted completions deliver on time. To mitigate these risks, developers can explore near-shoring, to reduce the distance travelled by materials. Supply chain platforms and social impact tools – such as the Net Zero Accelerator by Net Zero Careers<sup>10</sup> – are helping developers maximize local employment, apprenticeships and upskilling, to ensure that regeneration benefits are shared locally. Starting with social value embedded in the delivery phase is crucial for ensuring the completed development delivers on your social aims.



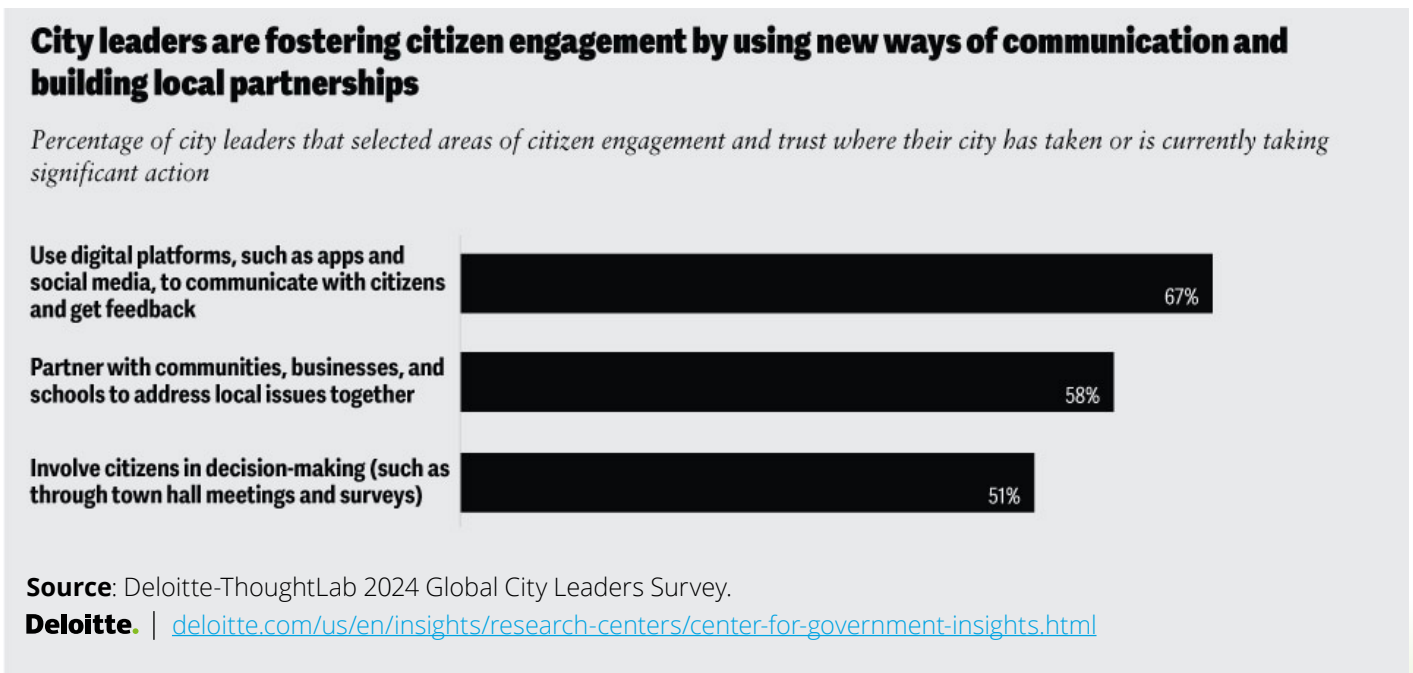
# Technology in Living: Enhancing Wellbeing and Community Connection

The true test of social value is in the lived experience. Smart building systems can now monitor a range of wellbeing indicators, from energy use to patterns of activity, such as the number of hours spent watching television, a key indicator of loneliness<sup>11</sup>. Digital platforms – like those used in Build to Rent (BtR) schemes and apps like Nextdoor<sup>12</sup> – are being integrated into new developments at the build stage, to connect neighbors, support local events, and foster a sense of belonging from day one. Collectively, these technologies help realize the vision of a ‘Smart City’, which uses data and interconnected systems to enhance efficiency, sustainability and residents’ wellbeing<sup>13</sup>. In the 2024 *Global City Leaders Survey*<sup>14</sup>, conducted by Deloitte and ThoughtLab, many respondents reported using technology to drive citizen engagement, as shown in Figure 1 below:

Importantly, as more sophisticated technology becomes available, platforms can be designed to support the ongoing evolution of place. For example, a community platform might start by sharing local news and events then, as technology advances, evolve to include smart health monitoring or energy management features, ensuring that the development adapts to residents’ changing needs over time.

Be careful to adopt platforms that enable inclusion, not exclusion, by offering accessible interfaces for the elderly, translation features for minorities, and tailored content to serve different user groups. This approach aligns with the UK Centre for Ageing Better’s finding that digital inclusion is important for reducing loneliness and supporting healthy ageing<sup>15</sup>.

**Figure 1:** 2024 Global City Leaders Survey





## Prediction: AI and Tech for Regenerative Communities

Looking ahead, AI and digital tools will play an increasingly important role in helping UK developments create long-term social value. According to the 2024 *Global City Leaders Survey*, technologies like digital twins and automation are increasingly being used to track and improve wellbeing, inclusion and sustainability in real time, as detailed in Figure 2 below<sup>16</sup>:

As these tools become more widely adopted, they can ultimately support the creation of regenerative communities<sup>17</sup> – places that continuously enhance social value while balancing economic growth and environmental responsibility.

**Figure 2:** From Future Vision to Urban Reality

<b>01</b>	<b>Data analytics</b>	<b>Melbourne:</b> "The integration of data analytics in city management has revolutionized the decision-making process, enabling officials to make choices based on real-time information rather than solely depending on their intuition or historical data. This has improved urban planning outcomes."
<b>02</b>	<b>IoT/sensors</b>	<b>Lisbon:</b> "We are able to collect real-time information from different sensors about traffic, air pollution, and noise pollution."
<b>03</b>	<b>Cloud</b>	<b>Oklahoma City:</b> "The cloud provides greater flexibility and scalability, allowing our city to respond rapidly to changing needs and prioritize resources."
<b>04</b>	<b>Cybersecurity</b>	<b>Johannesburg:</b> "By using advanced cybersecurity tools like firewalls, secure codes, and attack detectors, we have strengthened our digital safety."
<b>05</b>	<b>Modernized IT platform</b>	<b>Dundee:</b> "With a modernized IT platform in place, we have been able to set the stage for a future-ready city characterized by efficient digital services, enhanced data management, and improved security."
<b>06</b>	<b>Geospatial technology</b>	<b>Ottawa:</b> "GIS software has allowed us to arrange and assist in land use decision-making, evaluate data, and allocate resources appropriately."
<b>07</b>	<b>Chatbots</b>	<b>Nairobi:</b> "Our current use of chatbots and digital assistants has made sharing health data reports and other tax information easier."
<b>08</b>	<b>Automation</b>	<b>Niteroi:</b> "Adoption of automation technologies has helped the city become more efficient, sustainable, and responsive to the needs of its citizens."
<b>09</b>	<b>Collaboration tools</b>	<b>Da Nang:</b> "Digital collaboration tools are most effective. We get real-time updates on city projects and initiatives and simplified project management."
<b>10</b>	<b>Traditional AI</b>	<b>Ningbo:</b> "By using AI, we have successfully optimized energy consumption and distribution in real time, thereby improving grid stability and reliability through predictive maintenance."
<b>11</b>	<b>Digital twins</b>	<b>Paris:</b> "Digital twins are known to be one of the most effective technologies as it's a dynamic representation of the city's infrastructure, which encompasses buildings, transportation systems and more."

**Source:** ThoughtLab x Deloitte

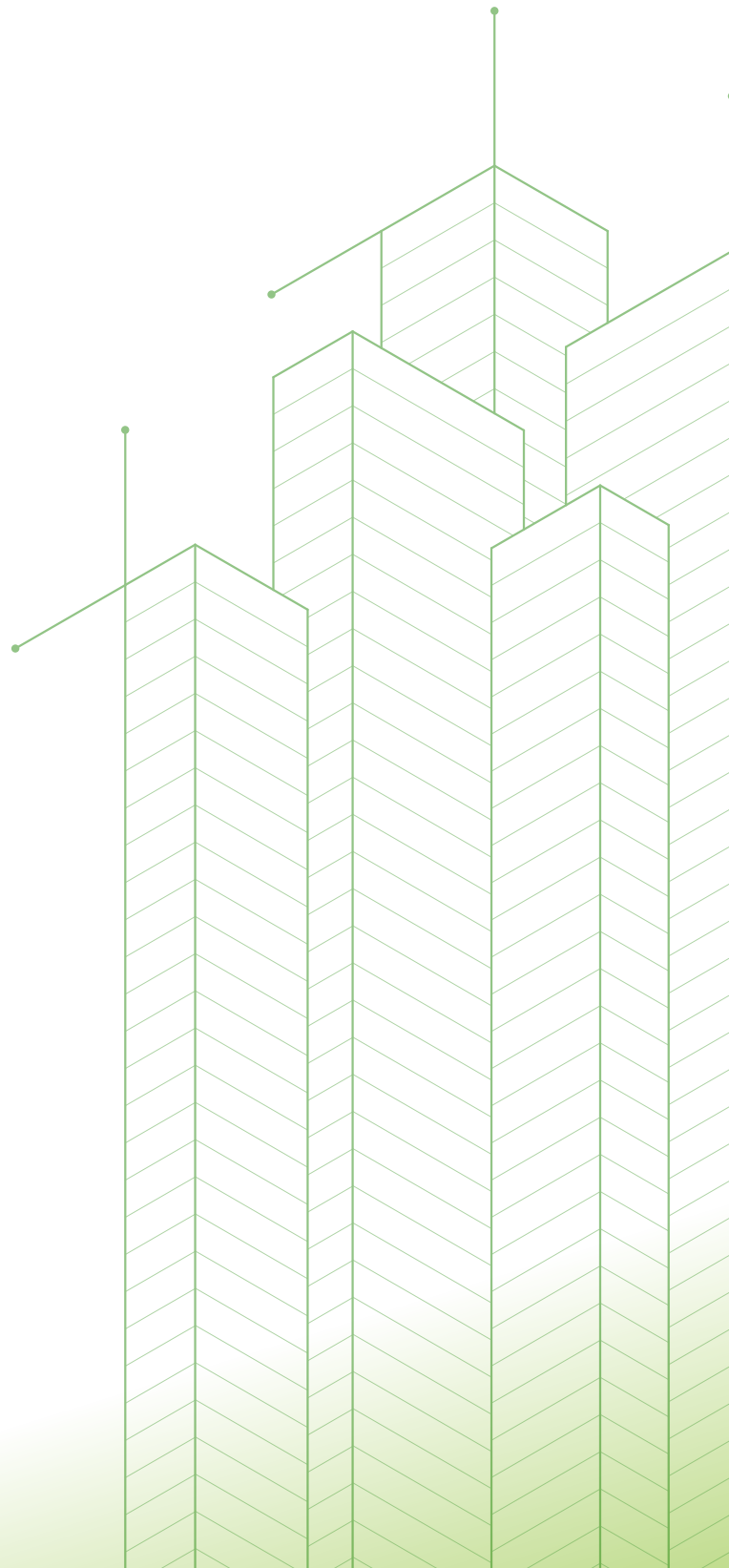


## Why This Matters

For real estate leaders, integrating social value and technology is a strategic imperative, especially when navigating market headwinds like project viability and regulatory complexities, as highlighted in Deloitte's London<sup>18</sup> and regional<sup>19</sup> Crane Surveys. Developments that deliver measurable social, environmental and economic outcomes are more resilient to shifts in the market and are essential for attracting investment. Throughout the project lifecycle, technology plays a pivotal role in driving these outcomes so, to capitalize on these trends, you should:

- Invest in digital engagement and masterplanning tools from the earliest design stages.
- Prioritize technology-enabled delivery methods, such as digital twins, to co-ordinate construction and monitor social value in real time and accelerate impact and inclusion.
- Embed smart systems and digital platforms that support wellbeing and community connection in the operational phase.
- Partner with social impact specialists<sup>20</sup> and technology providers to ensure best practice and innovation.

Effective use of these technologies will enable the UK real estate sector to lead the way, by building sustainable, inclusive and resilient communities.





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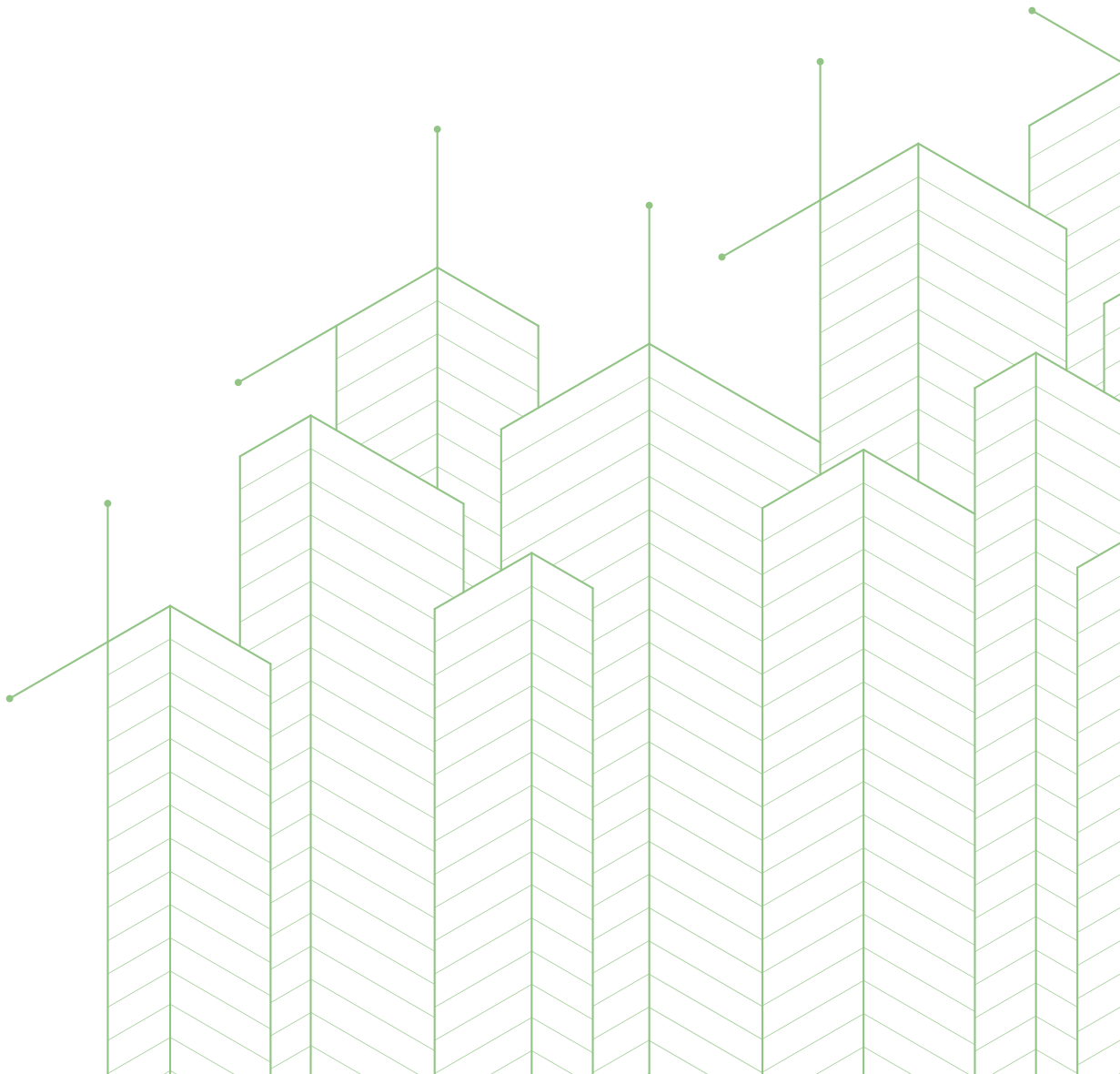


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## Endnotes

1. [UK housing gap stands at 6.5 million homes, finds CPS - The Centre for Policy Studies](#)
2. [YemeTech | Know Your Area](#)
3. [Commonplace | About Us & Our Team](#)
4. [Community Forum - Southwark Regeneration Demo/Template - Map - Commonplace](#)
5. [National Planning Policy Framework - 8. Promoting healthy and safe communities - Guidance - GOV.UK](#)
6. [State of the State | Deloitte UK](#)
7. [Building information modelling - GOV.UK](#)
8. [National Digital Twin Programme \(NDTP\) - GOV.UK](#)
9. [London Office Crane Survey hub | Deloitte UK](#)
10. [Home | Net Zero Careers | Find your Next Job](#)
11. [More than three hours of binge-watching TV could be sign of loneliness | The Independent](#)
12. [Nextdoor](#)
13. [Smart Cities - POST](#)
14. [Empowering urban ecosystems | Deloitte Insights](#)
15. [Society | The State of Ageing 2025 | Centre for Ageing Better](#)
16. [From Future Vision to Urban Reality - ThoughtLab](#)
17. [Urban regeneration, defined: here's why it matters - University of the Built Environment](#); Regenerative communities are defined as: regeneration is an urban planning strategy where money is invested into the improvement of specific urban areas. Often referred to as urban renewal, urban renaissance or even urban redevelopment, it tends to focus on three core areas: Economic revitalization, Social regeneration, Sustainability.  
The goal of urban renewal is to address the above issues through investment and improvement in infrastructure, economic opportunities, social provisions and public facilities.
18. [London Office Crane Survey hub | Deloitte UK](#)
19. [Deloitte Regional Crane Surveys | Deloitte UK](#)
20. [YemeTech | Know Your Area](#); Social impact specialists offer services such as; ESG related reporting, provides tracking, benchmarking and indices for social value metrics such as community health services, mapping of services and care worker catchments etc.

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