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Digitalising Social Value for Sustainable Urban Regeneration: Governance, Co-Production Gaps and Delivery Burdens in London

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Abstract

This paper investigates how social value is operationalised in urban regeneration and how digital reporting platforms shape the measurement and governance of social sustainability. Drawing on semi-structured interviews with UK social value professionals and a resident survey conducted within the Elephant and Castle regeneration programme in London, the study examines how platform-based systems translate procurement commitments into auditable performance categories. These systems embed predefined classification schemas, proxy valuation metrics and rule-based validation procedures that structure how outcomes become visible and comparable across projects. The findings indicate that digital reporting platforms enhance oversight and inter-project benchmarking but prioritise outcomes that align with measurable procurement indicators. Employment generation, apprenticeships and local procurement expenditure dominate reported performance, while relational and place-based outcomes, such as trust, belonging and neighbourhood continuity, remain marginal. Reporting requirements generate substantial evidencing burdens across supply chains, may introduce data distortions through proxy-based and threshold-led reporting, and can concentrate engagement at early project stages, limiting sustained community influence and creating technical barriers to participation. The analysis highlights how digital reporting platforms can operate as governance infrastructures within smart city environments, shaping what is prioritised, funded and recognised as credible impact. The findings provide practical insights for the design of more inclusive and proportionate digital accountability systems for sustainable local development.

Keywords: digital governance; digital reporting platforms; impact measurement; smart city governance; social value; social value reporting; stakeholder engagement; social sustainability; sustainable digital infrastructures; sustainable local development; urban regeneration

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1. Introduction

Urban regeneration is a key mechanism for delivering sustainable local development. It aims to improve housing provision, upgrade public realms and infrastructure, enhance mobility and stimulate local economic growth. However, regeneration remains contested because it produces both physical transformation and significant social consequences. Redevelopment can disrupt established communities through demolition, displacement and erosion of local identity and sense of place [1,2]. Research on housing retrofit programmes demonstrates that sustainability objectives often coexist with uneven benefit distribution and limited community influence within developer-led delivery models [3,4].

Regeneration is commonly evaluated through delivery outputs. Housing completions, capital investment and employment figures dominate performance frameworks. However, many of its most significant consequences are social and relational, unfolding over extended periods [2–4]. Continuity of community, trust in institutions, belonging and perceived fairness are central to social sustainability but are not easily captured within conventional reporting systems [2,5,6]. Standard evaluation approaches therefore struggle to represent the lived and relational dimensions of these programmes [7,8].

In the UK, social value has emerged as the primary policy framework for addressing regeneration's social dimension. The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 requires public authorities to consider how commissioning decisions may improve economic, social and environmental wellbeing [9]. Procurement Policy Note (PPN) 06/20 operationalised this requirement by introducing the Social Value Model and mandating the evaluation of social value in central government contract awards [10]. The model has subsequently been revised. Updated guidance for PPN 002 (updated March 2025) sets out how the revised Social Value Model should be applied across the commercial lifecycle for in-scope organisations [11]. Regeneration schemes increasingly translate social value commitments into auditable contractual obligations linked to procurement scoring and contract management [9–11].

Procurement frameworks are institutionally consequential because they establish the classificatory system through which social value becomes measurable, comparable and contractually enforceable [9–11]. These categories structure scoring criteria, monitoring requirements and evidentiary standards across the commercial lifecycle [12]. Revisions therefore recalibrate incentive structures and reshape delivery behaviour within regeneration programmes. Outcomes aligned with predefined and verifiable indicators are more likely to be prioritised, funded and sustained, while relational and place-based outcomes that resist standardisation remain structurally marginal within formal accountability systems. Where evaluation systems privilege auditable indicators, social value risks becoming narrowed to what can be readily counted and verified, while socially significant but less measurable outcomes such as trust, belonging and neighbourhood continuity receive less institutional recognition [13,14].

The institutionalisation of social value coincides with a broader digital transformation of urban governance [15,16]. When embedded within digital reporting platforms, procurement categories are operationalised through predefined data fields, proxy valuation metrics and structured validation workflows [17–19]. Policy change is therefore enacted not only through guidance documents but through platform architectures that structure how social value is logged, validated and benchmarked across projects [18–20]. Even where advanced artificial intelligence (AI) is not explicitly deployed, these systems generate governance effects through rule-based validation, proxy valuation models and automated benchmarking functions, stabilising particular classifications of impact within smart city accountability environments [15,16,21].

Despite its formal incorporation into procurement policy, contract award criteria and reporting requirements, social value remains ambiguously defined and unevenly operationalised. Scholarship continues to describe it as an evolving field with limited agreement on conceptual boundaries or consistent frameworks for implementation, particularly within regeneration contexts [7,8,12–14]. Social value spans public policy, procurement practice and community development, allowing for interpretative flexibility and varied measurement approaches. Within regeneration practice, social value is typically framed as additional social and economic commitments secured alongside core development outputs [3–5]. In practice, it is most often translated into measurable activities such as employment placements, apprenticeships and local procurement expenditure, while rela-

tional and community-defined outcomes receive less systematic attention [7,8]. This pattern shapes what is formally recognised and reported as impact across regeneration initiatives.

Digital reporting systems mediate this translation process, and performance within regeneration programmes is increasingly channelled through structured digital accountability infrastructures [17]. Platform-based tools (e.g., Thrive and Social Value Portal) enable delivery teams to log activities, upload documentation and calculate associated metrics [18–20]. These systems operate through predefined categories, evidencing requirements and validation procedures as described in platform guidance [18–20]. Data are aggregated across projects, benchmarked between contractors and reviewed by clients against contractual targets, reinforcing comparability across portfolios [18–20].

These infrastructures function as indicator architectures that translate complex social processes into structured, comparable and auditable datasets. By embedding classification rules, proxy valuation logics and validation protocols within software systems, they operate as smart city governance mechanisms shaping what becomes visible, measurable and defensible as social impact [18–20]. Research on indicator-driven governance demonstrates that measurement frameworks influence what is recognised as legitimate impact [5,22–24]. In regeneration contexts, reporting platforms translate social value commitments into performance through embedded indicator structures and audit requirements. Activities aligned with evidencing logics are privileged, while outcomes dependent on sustained engagement and trust-building remain harder to capture within structured reporting systems [6,22–24]. Consistent with the definition of social value as socially constructed and context-specific, prior research shows that socially meaningful outcomes are more likely to be recognised where evaluation frameworks combine quantitative indicators with qualitative evidence derived from sustained stakeholder engagement and lived experience [5–8].

Engagement is central to social sustainability across regeneration programmes. Co-production research identifies risks of tokenism where communities have limited influence over decision-making processes [2,7,8,25,26]. Engagement frequently occurs during early planning stages, with reduced continuity during detailed design and construction phases, particularly among vulnerable or disengaged groups [2,7,8,26]. When incorporated into reporting systems, engagement is often rendered as countable outputs aligned with contractual requirements, reshaping how time, resources and legitimacy are distributed across the regeneration lifecycle.

Existing scholarship on social value has primarily concentrated on definitional debates, procurement frameworks and measurement methodologies [7,8,12–14]. There remains comparatively limited empirical research examining how platform-based reporting systems reshape social value delivery within regeneration by embedding indicator hierarchies, evidencing rules and audit requirements that determine what is recorded, verified and institutionally recognised as impact [11,17,22,24]. While digital governance scholarship has examined smart city data infrastructures and indicator regimes [15,16,23], less attention has been paid to how everyday reporting platforms operate as governance mechanisms within local development systems.

In theoretical terms, this paper treats the digitalisation of social value primarily as a form of governance transformation rather than simply as the adoption of new reporting tools. Platform-based systems are treated as accountability infrastructures through which this governance transformation is enacted. To address this gap, this paper examines how social value is interpreted, operationalised and governed within regeneration practice, with particular attention to the role of digital reporting infrastructures. The analysis is organised around two research questions:

(1) How do social value professionals interpret social value, and how is it operationalised within urban regeneration schemes?

(2) How do platform-based reporting tools and procurement frameworks shape what is prioritised, documented and rewarded as social value?

Three objectives guide the analysis:

- To examine how built environment professionals interpret and operationalise social value across regeneration delivery contexts;
- To analyse how digital reporting platforms and procurement frameworks shape what is prioritised, measured and rewarded as social value within regeneration;
- To evaluate how professional and institutional framings of social value align, or fail to align, with resident perspectives and community priorities.

The study draws on semi-structured interviews with social value professionals and a resident survey conducted within the community context of the Elephant and Castle regeneration programme in London. The findings demonstrate that digital reporting infrastructures shape delivery priorities, accountability arrangements and engagement practices within regeneration. By embedding indicator hierarchies within digital systems, these infrastructures operate as smart city accountability architectures that influence which forms of social sustainability become institutionally recognised and which remain peripheral.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. Social Value and Accountability in Urban Regeneration

Urban regeneration occupies a central position within contemporary sustainability agendas because it simultaneously shapes environmental performance, economic opportunity and social wellbeing [27,28]. Regeneration programmes restructure housing provision, public space, service access and local labour markets over extended timeframes, producing long-term and often uneven social impacts. In parallel, urban regeneration has become closely associated with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) agendas, which require construction organisations to evidence social outcomes through auditable reporting [7,8,29]. This has intensified scrutiny of how social value is defined, operationalised and governed within project-based accountability systems [22,30,31].

In the UK, social value has been institutionalised through procurement policy, particularly through the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 and subsequent Social Value Model guidance, embedding expectations that social outcomes are specified, delivered and evidenced through contractual reporting [9–11]. Frameworks such as National Themes, Outcomes and Measures (TOMs) enable benchmarking and comparability across programmes, supporting transparency and accountability in public spending [12]. While these developments have mainstreamed social value, they also reinforce compliance logics within regeneration governance. Social value increasingly operates as a contractual deliverable demonstrated through reporting processes rather than as a strategic organising principle [32,33]. Reliance on quantified indicators embeds normative assumptions about what constitutes legitimate impact, stabilising particular interpretations of value while marginalising others [13,14]. Accountability systems therefore function not merely as oversight tools but as governance arrangements shaping how social value is recognised, validated and legitimised [30]. Within digitally mediated governance environments, these accountability arrangements are increasingly operationalised through platform-based reporting systems that embed classificatory rules, proxy metrics and verification protocols within everyday delivery workflows [14–16,21], thereby translating policy intent into structured data architectures.

This institutionalisation reflects a broader pattern in sustainability practice in which the social dimension has historically received less theoretical and operational attention

than environmental and economic performance [27,34]. Across regeneration governance systems, technical feasibility and financial viability are typically articulated through clearly specified performance objectives, whereas social performance is more often operationalised through procedural commitments and reporting requirements. This asymmetry structurally marginalises social objectives within project evaluation hierarchies. As a result, regeneration schemes may satisfy technical and financial criteria while generating contested or uneven social outcomes [1,3,4].

The conceptual foundations of social value complicate standardisation. Social value is grounded in socially constructed human values shaped by lived experience, cultural norms and local context [34–36]. Values evolve over time and influence how residents interpret regeneration change and neighbourhood transformation [37,38]. Social value is therefore inherently place-based and dynamic, creating tension between policy ambitions for standardised reporting and the lived complexity of regeneration outcomes. It is constituted through institutional arrangements and project practices that translate broad ambitions into operational categories of performance [30]. This translation process is neither neutral nor purely technical; it reflects embedded assumptions about legitimacy, evidence and comparability.

In practice, social value is frequently operationalised through measurable activity rather than socially meaningful change. Definitions remain unevenly understood across professional groups, contributing to variation in implementation [13,31]. Delivery commonly prioritises outcomes that are straightforward to evidence, such as employment or local procurement spend, while relational and experiential outcomes, such as trust, belonging and neighbourhood continuity, receive less systematic attention within formal reporting systems [22,39,40]. Reporting frameworks therefore privilege measurable outputs, shaping investment decisions, resource allocation and programme focus [14,24].

2.2. Stakeholder Engagement and Social Value Delivery in Urban Regeneration

If social value is understood as socially meaningful change rather than compliance output, stakeholder engagement becomes central to regeneration delivery. Regeneration programmes involve complex networks of actors including local authorities, developers, contractors, delivery partners, community organisations and residents [32,41–44]. Engagement is positioned as the mechanism through which social value is identified, negotiated and translated into practice within contested urban transformation environments [7,8,30,45].

Evidence demonstrates that sustained engagement improves decision quality, reduces opposition and strengthens project legitimacy [44,46]. Early identification of stakeholder concerns can minimise redesign and implementation resistance, supporting more stable and locally responsive regeneration delivery [32,42,47]. Conversely, weak stakeholder integration is associated with delivery risk, programme delay and contested outcomes [32,42,47]. Community responses are shaped not only by technical and economic considerations but by perceptions of fairness, identity, trust and belonging [2,7,8,29]. Trust depends on perceived competence, fairness and motivations of decision-makers, and resistance frequently reflects value conflict or perceived injustice rather than technical disagreement [30,48–51]. Sustained and meaningful engagement therefore supports long-term project acceptance and institutional stability.

Engagement effectiveness depends not only on procedural design but on relational conditions. Psychological safety supports meaningful participation and knowledge sharing [52,53]. Authentic engagement requires recognition of lived experience as legitimate knowledge alongside technical expertise [2,7,8]. Social outcomes are shaped across full project lifecycles rather than at discrete consultation points. Engagement concentrated only

in early planning stages can reinforce perceptions of tokenism [25,26]. Construction and delivery phases often generate the most visible local impacts, and failure to maintain communication during these phases can erode trust established earlier [50,51]. These dynamics are closely linked to the concept of social licence to operate, in which project legitimacy depends on trust, transparency and perceived fairness of decision-making processes.

However, when engagement practices are incorporated into digital reporting platforms, they are frequently translated into countable activities, participation metrics or consultation events aligned with contractual requirements [14–16]. Within smart city governance environments, this translation may narrow the institutional recognition of co-production by privileging measurable engagement outputs over sustained relational influence and locally defined priorities [21,54].

2.3. Power and Inclusion in Urban Regeneration Governance

Participation in regeneration is shaped by power relations and institutional structures. It is influenced by who is invited, whose knowledge is considered credible and whose priorities shape delivery decisions [30,51]. Engagement may therefore be publicly visible yet substantively limited where consultation is structured around predetermined delivery models [1,3,25,26]. As Arnstein's ladder of participation illustrates, consultation can function as tokenism when influence is procedural rather than substantive [25].

Regeneration impacts are unevenly distributed across social groups [1,3,4]. Vulnerable and marginalised groups face structural participation barriers including language, accessibility, time poverty and low institutional trust [26,48]. Inclusive engagement therefore requires proactive design rather than reliance on open-invitation models [25,26]. Without such design, participation risks reproducing existing inequalities rather than mitigating them [3,26].

Traditional stakeholder mapping approaches can reinforce power asymmetries by prioritising influence and organisational visibility over vulnerability or exposure to impact [32,41–43]. These tendencies align with broader institutional logics within built environment practice, where technical feasibility and financial viability are articulated through defined objectives, while social performance is often framed procedurally and through compliance. Institutional norms privilege technical and documentary evidence over lived experience, reinforcing structural inequality in regeneration decision-making [14,51].

Where impact is defined primarily through quantifiable indicators, locally defined priorities and experiential knowledge risk diminished visibility within formal accountability systems [5,14–16]. Power therefore operates not only through formal representation but through institutional criteria that determine which claims are translated into recognised impact and which remain peripheral within governance and reporting arrangements [14,30]. Inclusion is shaped not only by access to participatory forums but by the hierarchies embedded within project evaluation and reporting systems. In digitally mediated contexts, these criteria are further embedded within platform architectures that predefine acceptable categories of evidence [15,16,21].

2.4. Measuring and Digital Reporting of Social Value

The expansion of social value policy has been accompanied by rapid growth in measurement and reporting frameworks. Social Return on Investment (SROI) has been widely adopted to support monetised evaluation of outcomes [55–57]. National TOMs have become central to procurement evaluation by enabling comparability across projects [9,18]. These frameworks respond to demands for transparency and value for money in regeneration funding and public accountability.

Digital reporting platforms can be understood as governance infrastructures: they do not simply record social value but organise the categories, metrics and evidential practices through which social value is made institutionally legible. Measurement systems shape delivery by defining what constitutes legitimate evidence. Quantification frameworks privilege outcomes that can be numerically represented and comparatively benchmarked, while relational and long-term social processes resist such standardisation [5,14,16]. Numerical representation embeds epistemological and political choices about what counts as value, privileging auditable outputs over relational or evolving outcomes [13,14]. Social values evolve in response to lived experience and wider social change [34–38]. Regeneration outcomes are frequently experiential and place-specific, complicating their translation into standardised metrics [5,6].

While quantification supports comparability and auditability, it risks oversimplifying complex social experience [14,27]. The social impact evaluation literature therefore emphasises integrating quantitative indicators with qualitative evidence, including narrative accounts, stakeholder perceptions and lived experience [56,58]. Despite this, quantitative evidence continues to dominate formal reporting and decision-making within many regeneration programmes [13,39].

ESG reporting has intensified demand for comparable and auditable social performance data across organisational portfolios [29,59]. Urban regeneration projects operate within this broader accountability environment. Digital systems associated with smart city strategies are presented as mechanisms to enhance transparency and oversight. Digital governance research demonstrates that data infrastructures influence what becomes visible, comparable and governable within policy systems [21,40]. Within data-driven urban governance regimes, digital reporting architectures mediate how sustainability performance is structured and evaluated [15,16]. While digital reporting architectures can improve transparency and oversight, their benefits are not equally experienced. Participation and reporting quality are still shaped by digital divides, trust dynamics and capability constraints [26,48,54].

Within regeneration delivery, digital reporting platforms translate procurement commitments into structured indicators, audit requirements and evidence protocols [9–11,18–20]. By defining what can be logged, verified and compared, these platforms shape how social value is operationalised within accountability systems [14–16,21]. Operationally, such platforms standardise data entry fields, apply proxy valuations and enable cross-project benchmarking through automated workflows. These features embed normative assumptions within the reporting system, stabilising particular interpretations of impact and reinforcing comparability as a governance priority within smart city environments [14–16].

Building on arguments that social value is constituted through governance arrangements [30,31], digital reporting platforms can be conceptualised as value-translation infrastructures. Through embedded indicator architectures and audit protocols, they reinforce comparability across regeneration ecosystems while constraining interpretive flexibility regarding what qualifies as legitimate impact [14,15,21]. As reporting requirements become increasingly data-driven, they influence delivery behaviour by privileging outcomes that align with evidentiary logics, while complex relational outcomes become less visible within formal reporting structures [13,14,39].

The governance significance of digital innovation in regeneration does not rest solely on advanced artificial intelligence techniques but on the embedding of classification, valuation and benchmarking logics within digital infrastructures. Platform systems frequently operate through rule-based validation processes, proxy metrics and comparative analytics that structure how impact is defined, verified and compared across projects [16,21,40]. These infrastructures generate governance effects by stabilising particular interpretations

of performance within smart city accountability environments. Digital innovation therefore operates not merely as a technical enhancement but as a governance mechanism that redistributes attention, resources and legitimacy across regeneration systems [15,16,60].

These debates indicate that digitalisation in regeneration is not simply a technical development but a reorganisation of governance through digital infrastructures. Social value becomes actionable through classificatory systems, indicators and evidential conventions that define legitimate impact [13,14,30,31]. Once embedded in reporting platforms, these conventions are linked to procurement, accountability and cross-project comparison [15,16,21]. In turn, this reshapes participation, co-production and institutional power by influencing whose knowledge is recognised, how responsibilities are distributed, and which community priorities become visible within formal accounts of impact [7,8,25,26,45]. Digital reporting systems also have important operational limitations that require more explicit critical attention. Although presented as tools for transparency and consistency, they may introduce data distortions through proxy valuation, threshold-based validation and standardised classification fields that do not fully reflect lived or relational outcomes [13,14,56,58]. What is recorded is therefore shaped not only by what has occurred but by what the platform is capable of recognising and verifying [15,16,21,40]. In addition, the use of digital interfaces for consultation, reporting and participation may create technical thresholds for community engagement, particularly for groups affected by limited digital access, low confidence in institutional systems, language barriers or weak trust in formal processes [26,48,54]. From this perspective, digital platforms should not be understood as neutral administrative supports but as instruments of technology governance that can both enable and constrain participation, representation and accountability within regeneration [15,16,21].

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Research Design

To address the research questions, a qualitative case study design was adopted, combining semi-structured interviews with social value professionals and survey data from local residents. The case study approach enables in-depth examination of complex institutional and governance processes embedded within real-world delivery contexts, where procurement regimes, organisational practice and digital reporting systems intersect [61,62]. Rather than seeking statistical generalisability, the study provides analytically grounded insight into how reporting infrastructures influence professional behaviour and accountability arrangements across regeneration systems. The Elephant and Castle regeneration programme was selected as a critical case because of its scale, long duration, policy visibility and contested social outcomes, making it an appropriate setting in which to examine the governance effects of digitalised social value reporting. The case was selected because it reflects a distinct London and UK institutional context shaped by procurement-led social value policy, planning obligations and digital reporting requirements. The findings are not directly generalisable across cities but may be analytically relevant to regeneration contexts with similar governance arrangements.

Methodological triangulation was undertaken across professional interviews, resident survey responses and case documentation from the Elephant and Castle regeneration programme to enhance interpretive credibility and reduce single-source bias. Points of convergence and divergence between professional reporting narratives and resident perceptions were examined to strengthen interpretive depth. This allowed professional reporting narratives to be read alongside resident perspectives on regeneration and local priorities.

Data analysis proceeded in three stages. First, interview transcripts, resident open-text responses and relevant platform documents were reviewed repeatedly for familiarisation.

Second, interview transcripts and qualitative survey responses were coded inductively to identify recurring concepts relating to social value interpretation, evidencing practices, engagement and reporting constraints. Third, these codes were grouped into higher-order themes and compared across data sources to identify areas of convergence and divergence. This iterative cross-source analysis informed the development of three overarching analytical themes:

(1) Social value interpretation and reporting significance;
(2) Drivers shaping platform-based delivery and organisational behaviour;
(3) Barriers to social value delivery and engagement within digital reporting systems.

3.1.1. Semi-Structured Interviews

Primary data collection consisted of six semi-structured interviews with social value professionals working directly within UK urban regeneration delivery and reporting environments. The participants included senior and operational representatives from Tier 1 contractors and developers, sustainability and built environment consultancies, and specialist social value consultancies involved in large-scale regeneration programmes, as shown in Table 1. The participants were selected purposively on the basis of their direct responsibility for social value delivery, reporting or evidencing within regeneration-related projects. This sampling strategy was used to capture informed professional perspectives on how social value is interpreted, operationalised and documented across different organisational roles.

Table 1. Interview participant (IP) profile.

IP	Type of Organisation	Affiliation
1	Tier 1 Contractor/Developer	Social Value Manager
2	Tier 1 Contractor/Developer	Social Value Manager
3	Tier 1 Developer	Head of Social Impact
4	Sustainability and built environment consultancy	Director
5	Sustainability and built environment consultancy	Sustainability and Impact Coordinator
6	Social value consultancy	Director

The interviews were conducted between March and July 2025, lasted between 45 and 75 min, and were undertaken via secure online video platforms. The participants were recruited through professional networks and targeted outreach to individuals whose roles involved direct engagement with social value delivery and reporting. Discussions focused on five themes:

- Professional interpretations of social value and impact;
- Role of digital reporting platforms in structuring delivery priorities;
- Experiences of evidencing and audit requirements;
- Tensions between measurable outputs and community-defined outcomes;
- Practical implications of reporting compliance for delivery teams and supply chains.

All interviews were audio-recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim. The transcripts were analysed using inductive thematic analysis. Initial open coding identified recurring concepts, which were subsequently grouped into higher-order categories aligned with the research questions. Attention was given to convergence and divergence across organisational roles, particularly in relation to procurement scoring, performance benchmarking and the practical consequences of evidencing requirements. Coding was undertaken manually through iterative reading, annotation and category refinement. Manual coding was appropriate given the scale of the dataset and the interpretive aims of the

study [63,64]. Emerging themes were then compared with resident survey responses and platform documentation in order to strengthen interpretive robustness.

3.1.2. Resident Survey

In addition to professional interviews, the study incorporated survey data from residents engaged with the regeneration case study context. The survey captured perceptions of regeneration change, including experiences of engagement, community transformation and whether reported benefits reflected local priorities. The instrument combined Likert-scale questions with open-ended responses. It was organised into five sections covering resident background, perceived social value, engagement experience, perceived outcomes and community trust, as presented in Table 2. The survey was designed to provide an indicative resident perspective against which professional and institutional accounts of social value could be compared.

Table 2. Resident survey instrument structure.

Section	Theme	Question Format	Purpose
A	Resident background and exposure to urban regeneration	Multiple choice	Contextual responses
B	Perceived social value and local benefit	Likert scale and multiple choice	Assess perceived impact
C	Engagement and communication experience	Likert and open text	Capture engagement quality
D	Perceived urban regeneration outcomes	Likert and open text	Capture tangible and social impacts
E	Trust and long-term community change	Open text	Capture lived experience

The survey was hosted on SmartSurvey online platform and distributed via local community social media groups, targeted email circulation and community e-newsletters. Participation was voluntary, anonymous and self-selecting, and no financial incentives were offered. Eligibility was restricted to individuals identifying themselves as residents or community members with knowledge of the Elephant and Castle regeneration context. Informed consent was obtained through the survey platform prior to participation. The survey was open between May and August 2025 (13 weeks). A total of 23 responses were received. Of these, 11 were fully completed and used for descriptive analysis of the closed and Likert-scale survey items. Partial responses were incorporated qualitatively where relevant.

Quantitative responses were analysed descriptively using frequencies and percentages. Likert-scale responses were additionally summarised using mean scores (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) to enable comparison across survey items. Given the modest number of completed responses ($n = 11$), these values are presented as descriptive indicators rather than statistically generalisable results. Open-text responses were analysed qualitatively through repeated reading and thematic grouping in order to identify the issues most frequently raised by residents and to compare these priorities with contractor-reported social value outputs. The survey instrument is provided in Appendix A.

3.1.3. Platform Documentation Review

To contextualise interview accounts of reporting practice, a review of publicly available documentation for reporting platforms referenced by the participants (including Thrive and Social Value Portal) was undertaken. The review focused on identifying core structural features of these systems, including predefined indicator categories aligned with the National

TOMs framework [18], evidence upload requirements and validation procedures described in platform guidance [19,20], and benchmarking functions that enable cross-project performance comparison. Publicly available screenshots were also examined to illustrate how categories, calculator fields and evidence submission requirements are presented within the reporting interface, as shown in Figure 1. These materials were selected because they were directly referenced in interview accounts and provided documentary context for how social value is structured within platform-mediated reporting environments.

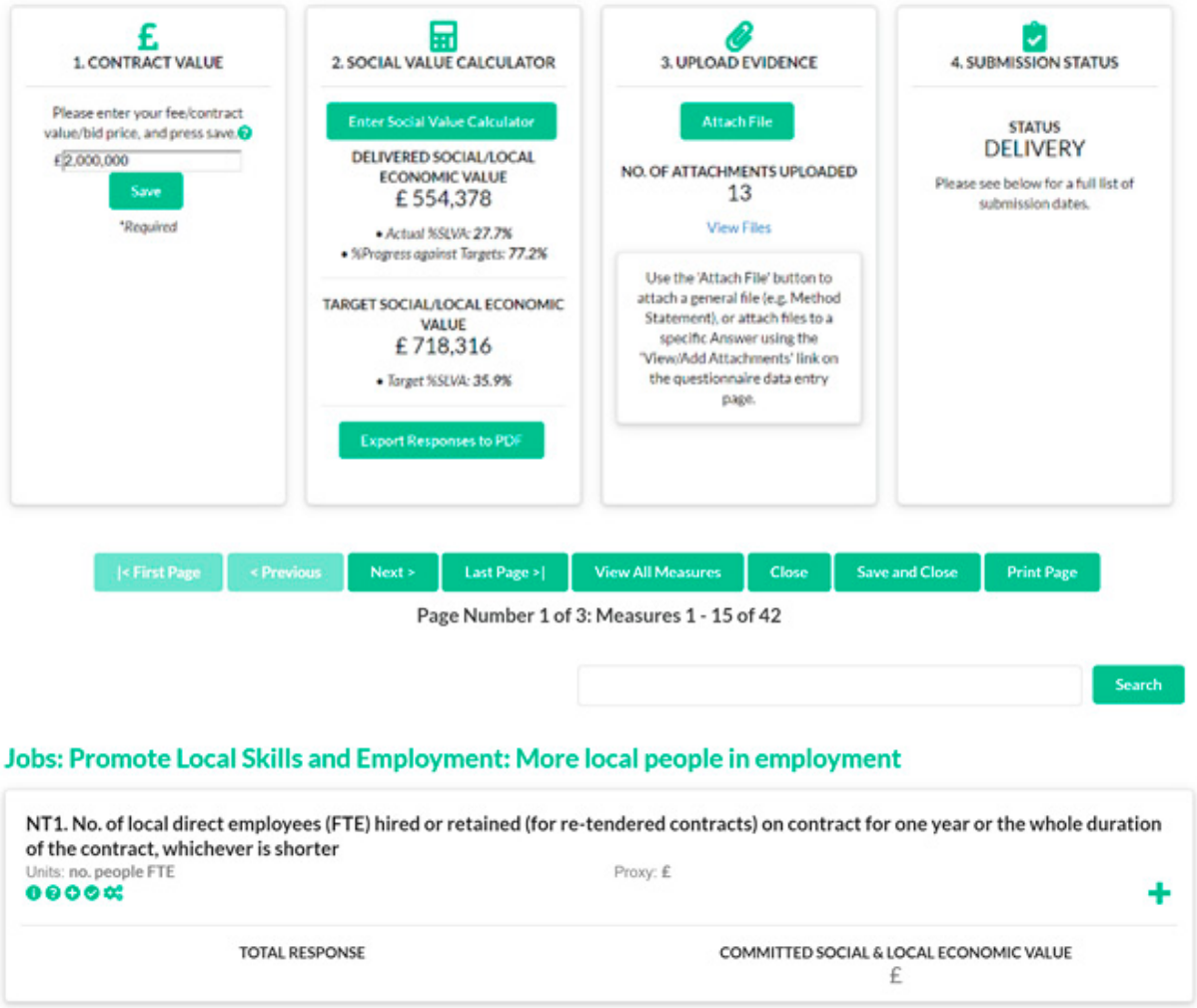

Figure 1. Social Value Portal interface showing predefined measures and evidence-upload fields [19]. Note: the interface symbols denote specific portal functions, namely information (**i**), help/guidance (**?**), add/select (**+**), confirmed/completed (✓), and link/share functionality (**linked-nodes icon**); the larger **+** symbol on the far right indicates that the measure can be expanded to display further details and evidence-upload fields.

The review focused on publicly accessible guidance materials and did not evaluate proprietary software or internal algorithmic models. Rather, it provided contextual insight into how reporting infrastructures structure data entry, verification processes and performance comparison. Consistent with qualitative case study methodology, documentary analysis supported the triangulation of interview findings and strengthened the interpretation of proxy-based measurement, evidencing burdens and cross-project comparability within platform-mediated reporting environments [61,62]. The screenshot is included for illustrative purposes only and is used to show the reporting structure described in the guidance, including predefined categories, calculator fields and evidence submission

functions. Documentary material was not analysed as a stand-alone dataset but used to corroborate and contextualise themes emerging from interviews and resident responses.

3.2. Case Study: The Elephant and Castle Urban Regeneration Programme

This study draws on a case study of the Elephant and Castle urban regeneration programme in London, one of the largest and longest-running regeneration schemes in the UK. The case provides an empirical context for examining how social value is operationalised through procurement and delivery structures and how reporting systems translate commitments into measurable evidence within regeneration governance. The programme combines large-scale housing redevelopment, transport infrastructure renewal, public realm investment and commercial development; it has attracted sustained policy attention and academic scrutiny due to its scale, duration and contested social impacts [64,65].

Designated as an early Opportunity Area in the London Plan (2002), the regeneration has spanned more than two decades. It has included the demolition of the Heygate Estate, the redevelopment of the former shopping centre site and the phased delivery of new residential, commercial and public space. The scheme has been widely debated, particularly in relation to resident displacement and perceived loss of community and cultural identity [65–67].

The regeneration reflects wider UK policy developments, including the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 and the Social Value Model. At a local level, Southwark Council has embedded social value commitments within planning and procurement frameworks, including requirements relating to housing provision, employment and skills, sustainability and community wellbeing [67–70].

Delivery has unfolded across multiple overlapping phases involving housing, commercial and public realm transformation, creating complex coordination and reporting environments across delivery partners and supply chains [71]. Social value commitments have been formalised through planning policy, Section 106 agreements and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions, including affordable housing, infrastructure investment and community development obligations [67–69,72].

Community engagement has remained contested throughout the programme. Early phases were criticised for limited consultation, leading to expanded engagement mechanisms in later stages. However, the displacement of more than 3000 former Heygate Estate residents remains central to the debate regarding social value outcomes and long-term community impact [66–71]. This context is important for interpreting the scope of the findings. Elephant and Castle reflects a specifically London and UK regeneration setting shaped by social value legislation, local planning mechanisms, developer-led delivery and digital reporting practices. The case is therefore context-specific rather than broadly representative, although the findings may have analytical relevance for other cities operating under similar procurement, compliance and reporting conditions.

4. Results

4.1. Social Value Interpretation and Reporting Significance

Across interviews, social value was described as conceptually fluid yet structurally disciplined by procurement governance. Rather than emerging from community definition, it was framed as shaped by contractual obligation. As IP1 explained:

> "*Social value is interpreted differently because it stems from the public sector, where it is obliged through procurement, so it's something you have to respond to in a particular way rather than something organically defined by the community.*"

IP2 reinforced this instability:

> "*It's all pretty ambiguous, and in practice a lot of the role becomes about connecting what the council says it wants, what the project can realistically deliver, and what the community is actually asking for.*"

Ambiguity therefore persists, but it is managed through institutional translation rather than resolved through consensus.

However, once embedded within procurement scoring systems, interpretive flexibility narrows. IP1 described TOMs not simply as a reporting mechanism but as a structuring logic:

> "*Most social value is via TOMs. It is fundamental to all public procurement because it's how we're scored in the bid, so the way we design what we're going to deliver is already shaped by those proxy values.*"

This indicates that monetised indicators shape intervention design at inception, meaning that delivery priorities are often pre-structured by scoring criteria before community engagement begins.

A review of publicly available platform documentation indicates that these indicators are embedded within predefined digital categories that must be selected when logging activity. Outcomes are only formally recognised where they correspond to established reporting fields. Interpretation is therefore not shaped solely by procurement scoring but by the structured data architecture through which impact must later be recorded and validated. In this sense, digital reporting systems operate not merely as recording tools but as boundary-setting mechanisms that define what becomes institutionally visible.

Representational limitations were acknowledged. IP2 argued that some KPIs do not always accurately reflect what has been delivered. Meaningful outcomes may be achieved, but if they do not fit established categories or reach specified thresholds, they are not captured in reported figures, rendering certain forms of relational or incremental impact effectively invisible within formal dashboards.

At the regeneration scale, interpretation becomes strategically embedded within ESG discourse. IP3 defined value at Elephant Park as:

> "*Value plus commercial, socioeconomic, and environmental uplift, delivering a 1:6 return on investment across the programme.*"

Importantly, she clarified that initiatives such as the Construction Skills Centre and elements of public realm investment were "none of which were contractual requirements." These discretionary interventions were subsequently consolidated through SROI modelling and a Theory of Change framework, translating locally embedded activity into institutionally legible performance indicators. Platform-based reporting systems enable this consolidation by converting locally embedded initiatives into comparable performance units through proxy valuation metrics and aggregation functions. Through this process, context-specific social interventions are reformatted into standardised outputs capable of cross-project benchmarking.

Consultancy perspectives further complicated definitional coherence. IP4 emphasised that borough-specific procurement weighting systems shape early-stage bid alignment, effectively determining which categories of value are prioritised. IP5 highlighted increasing pressure to align outputs with ESG dashboards and SDG reporting, reinforcing reliance on comparable and auditable indicators. IP6 observed that employment and local spend proxies dominate formal frameworks because they are measurable, whereas cultural continuity and belonging remain marginal due to resistance to monetisation, thus revealing a hierarchy of impact visibility within digital governance systems.

Resident survey findings reveal a different hierarchy of priorities. Healthcare and wellbeing services were identified by 81.8% of the respondents, affordable housing by

72.7%, and sustainability and green infrastructure by 63.6%. Crime and safety were reported by 81.8%, while 72.7% expressed concern regarding housing affordability and displacement. Likert-scale items examining perceptions of regeneration outcomes, engagement processes and community influence were summarised using mean scores on a five-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) to facilitate comparison across items (Table 3).

Table 3. Mean scores for Likert-scale survey items (n = 11). Scale: 1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree.

Survey Item	Mean (1–5)
Regeneration improved the design, accessibility and sustainability of the area	2.6
Redevelopment reflects the needs and culture of the existing community	2.4
Access to affordable housing and essential services improved	2.7
Residents were aware of consultation opportunities	2.8
Community feedback influenced regeneration decisions	2.3
Regeneration contributes to a stronger sense of community	2.5

Across all items, the mean scores fall below the neutral midpoint of three, indicating consistently critical resident assessments of regeneration outcomes, engagement processes and perceived community influence. Given the modest number of completed responses (n = 11), these values are presented as descriptive indicators rather than statistically generalisable findings. Open-text responses provided further insight into resident concerns. Comments most frequently referred to housing affordability, displacement, safety, community identity and access to local services. These themes suggest that residents primarily understood social value in terms of everyday wellbeing and neighbourhood continuity rather than the employment and procurement indicators that dominate formal reporting systems, as summarised in Table 4.

Table 4. Themes identified in resident open-text responses.

Theme	Illustrative Keywords	Interpretation
Housing affordability	Affordability, rent, cost	Concerns about rising housing costs
Displacement	Displacement, relocation, loss of neighbours	Concerns about community continuity
Safety and crime	Safety, crime, security	Concerns about everyday security
Community identity	Culture, belonging, character	Perceived loss of local identity
Services and wellbeing	Healthcare, services, amenities	Need for accessible local services

4.2. Drivers Influencing Platform-Based Social Value Delivery and Organisational Behaviour

Procurement competitiveness emerged as the dominant behavioural driver shaping social value delivery. IP2 stated:

> "*Social value is not a nice to have, it's a contract requirement, and if you don't meet it, you don't win the job.*"

This positions social value as structurally embedded within tender evaluation rather than discretionary corporate responsibility, recasting social value from ethical aspiration

into competitive infrastructure. IP1 described how reporting obligations extend across supply chains:

> "*We're a main contractor, so I'm having to influence other businesses in how they run their HR processes, because if we've committed to ring-fence jobs for local people, that commitment has to flow down.*"

IP2 further described the need to translate "*language across frameworks*", referring to alignment between TOMs, Thrive and client-specific reporting systems. This illustrates how platforms function as governance infrastructure, shaping internal processes, subcontractor engagement and evidencing routines.

Publicly available platform descriptions indicate that performance data are aggregated and benchmarked across projects and contractors. This capacity for cross-project comparison reinforces the competitive incentives identified by the participants. Visibility within digital dashboards therefore becomes intertwined with competitive positioning in regeneration markets.

At the developer level, behavioural drivers intersect with corporate sustainability strategies. IP3 described alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities). Within Elephant and Castle, decisions such as incubating independent local hospitality businesses rather than installing national chains were framed as attempts to balance commercial return with community retention. Impact was subsequently consolidated through SROI modelling and ESG reporting frameworks, embedding regeneration outputs within global sustainability narratives where local interventions are reframed through international indicators.

The consultancy participants indicated that these drivers have become institutionalised. IP4 described cross-borough procurement variability as encouraging portfolio-level standardisation to manage compliance risk. IP5 highlighted duplication pressures where identical initiatives must be translated across multiple digital systems. IP6 observed that reporting sophistication increasingly shapes reputational positioning within regeneration markets, making digital competence itself a competitive differentiator.

Digital reporting systems facilitate this translation by enabling exportable summaries, aggregated outputs and proxy-derived financial valuations, thereby linking site-level activity to portfolio-level ESG disclosure requirements.

The survey findings again reveal tension between formal engagement and perceived influence. While 46% reported participating in online consultations and 36% attended public meetings, 41% indicated they were not consulted at all. Moreover, 55% felt that community feedback did not influence final decisions. This perception is reflected in the low mean score recorded for the survey item examining whether community feedback influenced regeneration decisions (2.3; Table 3). These patterns suggest that digitally documented participation does not necessarily translate into perceived agency, reinforcing concerns about procedural rather than substantive co-production.

4.3. Barriers to Social Value Delivery and Engagement in Digital Reporting

Evidencing requirements were described as structurally demanding. IP2 characterised employment verification processes as administratively intensive and ethically sensitive:

> "*Really quite sensitive data has to be collected. . . it's a little bit intrusive, especially when you're asking people to evidence previous unemployment status.*"

IP1 similarly described the relational labour required to embed reporting expectations across supply chains:

> "*You have to take subcontractors on that journey, and that takes time, because not everyone sees it as their responsibility.*"

Metric rigidity further constrains delivery flexibility. Duration thresholds for classifying new employment outcomes do not always align with construction labour patterns, meaning meaningful but short-term engagements may remain uncounted within formal totals. This produces misalignment between lived delivery practice and reported performance.

Platform documentation confirms that reporting systems require the selection of predefined indicator categories, submission of supporting evidence and validation against specified thresholds before outcomes are formally recorded. Benchmarking functions enable comparison across projects and contractors. These structural characteristics institutionalise standardisation, reinforcing reliance on proxy-based scoring mechanisms.

The consultancy participants framed these issues structurally. IP4 emphasised duplication across reporting frameworks as administratively burdensome. IP5 highlighted pressures to reconcile social value data with ESG dashboards and sustainability disclosures, reinforcing dependence on proxy metrics. IP6 argued that threshold-based indicators marginalise relational and cultural impacts, narrowing what becomes visible within digital governance systems and thereby constraining the scope of recognised impact.

At the regeneration scale, IP3 acknowledged that detailed social impact benchmarking was not embedded at project inception and required retrospective consolidation. Infrastructure constraints and carbon-related pressures further limited sequencing flexibility. The resident responses indicate parallel barriers. In addition to consultation concerns, 48% reported that regeneration schemes did not reflect local community culture.

This pattern is consistent with the low mean score recorded for the survey item examining whether redevelopment reflects the needs and culture of the existing community (2.4; Table 3). Open-text responses frequently referenced displacement, affordability pressures and weakening social ties, forms of impact that remain weakly captured within employment- and expenditure-focused reporting categories. This divergence between reporting priorities and resident concerns is summarised in Table 5.

Table 5. Divergence between contractor-reported outputs and resident priorities.

Social Value Category	Contractor Reporting Emphasis	Resident Priority
Employment and apprenticeships	High	Low
Local procurement	High	Low
Affordable housing	Moderate	High
Safety and crime	Low	High
Healthcare and wellbeing	Low	High
Community continuity and belonging	Low	High

A comparison of the interview findings with the resident survey indicates a clear divergence between contractor-reported social value outputs and the priorities identified by the residents. While professional reporting emphasises employment, apprenticeships and local procurement, residents most frequently highlight affordability, safety, healthcare and community continuity.

5. Discussion

The findings indicate that digital reporting platforms shape how social value is defined, structured and recognised within urban regeneration. These systems operate through

predefined indicator categories, proxy valuation metrics and validation thresholds that standardise the documentation of impact. Measurement frameworks influence what becomes institutionally visible and comparable [14]. Within regeneration contexts, the codification of social value commitments into structured reporting fields stabilises particular interpretations of value and constrains others. Outputs that can be quantified, verified and benchmarked acquire formal recognition, whereas relational, experiential and place-specific dimensions of change remain less systematically represented [5,13,31,39].

This reinforces scholarship positioning social value as produced through governance and procurement arrangements rather than existing independently of them [12,30,33]. The findings show how this governance reorganisation works in practice: platform-based reporting redistributes responsibility for evidencing social value across clients, contractors and supply chains while simultaneously narrowing which outcomes become institutionally visible. The evidence demonstrates how digital reporting platforms operationalise this institutional production of value in practice. Dashboard comparability, cross-project aggregation and evidencing protocols embed social value within contemporary urban data infrastructures [15,16,21,23]. These infrastructures standardise interpretation across projects and organisations, enabling comparability while simultaneously narrowing the range of recognised impact. The governance effects observed arise from rule-based comparability and structured proxy valuation embedded within reporting systems, rather than from discretionary judgment at the project level.

The divergence between the contractor-reported outputs and resident-defined priorities is also reflected in the themes emerging from the resident open-text responses and extends established critiques of domestic retrofit and regeneration processes [1,3,4,65–67]. Studies of community-led and subsidised housing highlight tensions between institutional delivery models, displacement, sense of community and lived experience [2]. The present findings indicate that these tensions persist within digitally monitored regeneration environments. Although procurement frameworks are designed to secure broader social benefits [9–12,18], their operationalisation through standardised indicators privileges employment, training and expenditure proxies [13,31,57]. Residents, however, prioritise affordability, safety, healthcare access and neighbourhood continuity. These priorities align with relational and value-based understandings of sustainability that emphasise lived experience, identity and social trust [5,6,27,34–38]. The coexistence of formally reported performance success and continuing community concern therefore reflects structural features of accountability systems rather than isolated implementation failures.

The analysis contributes to debates on the social dimension of sustainability. Social sustainability has long been described as conceptually diffuse and operationally underdeveloped relative to environmental and economic pillars [27,28]. Indicator-driven approaches risk reducing complex social processes to administratively manageable metrics [5,14]. The findings suggest that digital reporting systems reinforce this tendency by stabilising measurable outputs within formal dashboards and benchmarking systems. Trust, belonging, cultural continuity and perceived safety are more difficult to standardise within predefined reporting categories. As a result, these dimensions remain weakly institutionalised despite their centrality to resident experience.

The study also intersects with the stakeholder participation literature. Foundational analyses distinguish between procedural consultation and substantive influence [25,51]. Research on construction and infrastructure governance has examined how institutional drivers shape engagement practices and define stakeholder salience [32,33,41–43,47]. More recent work on inclusive stakeholder engagement in the built environment emphasises sustained relational processes across project lifecycles and the importance of early-stage involvement in shaping outcomes [7,8]. The present findings indicate that when engagement

activities are translated into countable outputs within digital reporting systems, procedural inclusion may expand while substantive influence remains limited. Consultation becomes documented, auditable and comparable, yet its capacity to alter upstream planning and design decisions is constrained by existing procurement and development structures.

Operational consequences are also evident. The participants described duplication across reporting frameworks, substantial documentation requirements and sensitivities associated with personal data verification. These observations correspond with critiques of expanding ESG disclosure regimes and sustainability reporting infrastructures [29,59]. As digital reporting becomes embedded within governance systems, professional time and organisational capacity are reallocated toward compliance, data validation and cross-framework translation [21,40]. Within regeneration contexts, this redistribution of effort may reduce the scope for strategic reflection on underlying development models and social outcomes.

These operational burdens also raise a broader issue of technology governance. The findings suggest that digital tools do not merely increase administrative workload; they also shape the quality and reliability of the social value evidence that enters formal decision-making. Proxy values, fixed evidencing rules and validation thresholds may produce data that appear robust and comparable while still under-representing informal, relational or community-defined outcomes [13,14,56,58]. Similarly, where participation is mediated through formal digital channels, technical access, confidence and trust become conditions of visibility within governance processes [26,48,54]. This means that digitalisation may widen the gap between institutionally legible impact and lived experience, not only because some outcomes are difficult to quantify but because some actors face higher thresholds for having their knowledge recognised within platform-based systems [15,16,21,40]. The findings suggest that platform-mediated participation and evidencing processes function not only as administrative mechanisms but also as institutional thresholds that shape whose knowledge is rendered visible within formal decision-making. A further structural issue concerns lifecycle alignment. Many of the concerns identified by residents, including affordability, displacement and community continuity, are shaped during planning and policy formulation stages [1–4,65–67]. However, formal social value reporting obligations are frequently concentrated during construction delivery, where contractors are required to evidence predefined indicators. Responsibility for evidencing impact is therefore separated from responsibility for shaping long-term social conditions. This helps explain why platform-based reporting systems often reproduce policy and procurement priorities set earlier in the regeneration process, rather than capturing the full range of resident-defined concerns. This institutional configuration contributes to the divergence between formal reporting narratives and lived experience, as actors tasked with reporting are not always those with influence over structural determinants of social sustainability.

Digital reporting platforms therefore influence how social sustainability is interpreted, prioritised and enacted within regeneration practice. In urban governance environments increasingly structured through data infrastructures and standardised performance frameworks [15,16,21,23], the design of accountability systems shapes which forms of impact are recognised, validated and institutionalised within sustainable local development processes. The findings suggest that attention to the architecture of reporting systems is central to understanding how social value is operationalised in contemporary smart city contexts.

6. Conclusions

This research examined how social value is delivered and evidenced within urban regeneration and how digital reporting systems shape governance practice. The findings indicate that while digital platforms strengthen oversight, comparability and auditabil-

ity, they also privilege measurable economic outputs and reinforce compliance-oriented delivery logics. Social value within regeneration is therefore institutionalised through procurement structures yet constrained by indicator systems that favour quantifiable activities over relational and place-based outcomes. Digital accountability does not inherently generate social legitimacy. Nor are digital tools neutral in their operation: they may reproduce bias through proxy-based measurement, introduce technical thresholds to participation, and privilege forms of evidence that are easier to standardise than to substantiate socially.

The divergence between professionally reported performance and resident-defined priorities is reinforced by the survey findings and highlights a structural governance challenge. Employment and training metrics dominate formal reporting systems, whereas residents emphasise affordability, safety, trust, displacement risk and neighbourhood continuity. These concerns are often shaped during early planning and policy decisions, yet reporting responsibility is concentrated at later delivery stages. Without recalibrating lifecycle accountability, digitally mediated systems risk narrowing the operational scope of social sustainability by reinforcing output-based compliance rather than socially meaningful change. Addressing this misalignment requires embedding social value responsibilities more consistently across planning, design and delivery phases.

Digital reporting platforms should therefore be understood as governance instruments requiring deliberate design, lifecycle integration and periodic review. Their embedded classification systems, proxy metrics and validation thresholds determine which forms of impact become visible and comparable within accountability environments. Aligning reporting infrastructures with broader social sustainability objectives is essential if urban regeneration is to maintain legitimacy within increasingly data-structured policy contexts.

Conceptually, this paper argues that digitalisation should be understood primarily as a form of governance transformation, with platform-based reporting systems acting as the institutional means through which responsibility, visibility and legitimacy are reorganised. In doing so, these systems shape comparability and accountability while also influencing which forms of impact gain institutional recognition. Relational, place-based and community-defined outcomes remain harder to accommodate within these governing logics.

From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that reporting systems would be strengthened by incorporating more structured qualitative evidence alongside quantitative indicators, including resident perspectives, narrative accounts and longer-term reflections on community change. Greater attention is also needed to lifecycle accountability. If the concerns most important to residents are shaped during planning and design, social value obligations cannot remain concentrated primarily at the construction stage. More effective systems would therefore embed responsibilities across planning, procurement, design and delivery, improve interoperability across reporting frameworks, and allow greater scope for locally defined priorities such as affordability, displacement risk, cultural continuity and safety to be reflected within formal reporting structures.

While this qualitative case study provides in-depth insight into digitally mediated social value governance, its conclusions should be interpreted within the institutional and geographical boundaries of the case. The study is situated in London and within a UK policy environment shaped by the Public Services (Social Value) Act, procurement-led social value frameworks, local planning obligations and the growing use of digital reporting platforms. The findings are therefore not intended to be directly generalisable to all cities or regeneration systems, but they may offer analytically transferable insights for urban contexts in which social value is similarly operationalised through procurement, compliance and platform-based accountability infrastructures. Where regulatory systems, governance

traditions, community participation arrangements or digital reporting requirements differ substantially, the form and effects of social value governance may also differ.

The single-case design and modest sample size further limit statistical generalisability. In particular, the Likert-scale survey results and associated mean scores are presented as descriptive indicators supporting the qualitative analysis rather than as representative claims. Future research should extend this work through comparative cross-city studies and larger multi-stakeholder samples to examine how far the governance effects identified here travel across different institutional settings. Comparative work would be especially valuable in distinguishing which findings are specific to London's regeneration and procurement environment and which may be more broadly applicable across other urban contexts. Further research could also use more in-depth community-based methods, including resident interviews or focus groups, and longitudinal designs tracking projects across full regeneration lifecycles to examine more fully how social value is understood, contested and experienced over time.

Urban regeneration increasingly operates within structured accountability systems. Ensuring that reporting infrastructures recognise socially meaningful change, rather than solely auditable outputs, is central to advancing sustainable local development. How that challenge should be addressed, however, will vary across cities according to their regulatory frameworks, planning systems, delivery models and forms of community participation. The core challenge is not whether to digitalise social value but how to design reporting systems that reflect the complexity of social sustainability rather than narrowing its scope.

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Informed Consent Statement: Verbal informed consent was obtained from the participants. Verbal consent was obtained rather than written consent because the interviews were conducted via MS Teams to accommodate the interviewees' availability.

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Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in this manuscript:

AI	Artificial Intelligence
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy
EDI	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
ESG	Environmental, Social and Governance
IP	Interview Participant
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SROI	Social Return on Investment
TOMs	Themes, Outcomes and Measures
UK	United Kingdom

Appendix A. Resident Survey Questionnaire

The resident survey was designed to capture perceptions of urban regeneration change, including experiences of community engagement, community transformation, perceived social value and long-term community trust, within the Elephant and Castle regeneration context.

Section A. Resident background and exposure to urban regeneration

A1. What is your age group?

- 18–25
- 26–34
- 35–49
- 50–64
- 65 and above
- Prefer not to say

A2. How do you identify?

- Male
- Female
- Other
- Prefer not to say

A3. Are you aware of the regeneration programme taking place in Elephant and Castle?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

A4. Have you experienced or witnessed any negative impacts related to redevelopment in your area?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Section B. Perceived social value and local benefit

Likert Scale: 1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree

B1. The regeneration of Elephant and Castle has improved the design, accessibility and sustainability of the area.

1 2 3 4 5

B2. The redevelopment reflects the needs and culture of the existing local community.

1 2 3 4 5

B3. The redevelopment has preserved or improved access to affordable housing and essential services.

1 2 3 4 5

B4. Which of the following social benefits do you feel the redevelopment should prioritise?

Select up to three

- Affordable housing
- Job creation or training opportunities
- Improved public spaces or parks
- Support for local businesses
- Access to healthcare or wellbeing services
- Cultural or community events
- Sustainability and green infrastructure
- Youth and education programmes
- Other (please specify)

Section C. Engagement and communication experience

Likert Scale: 1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree

C1. I was aware of opportunities to participate in public consultation or community planning events.

1 2 3 4 5

C2. How were you informed or consulted about the project?

Select all that apply

- Public meetings
- Community workshops
- Online surveys
- Flyers or posters
- Social media
- I was not informed or consulted

C3. Do you feel that community feedback influenced decisions in the project?

- Yes, significantly
- Yes, to some extent
- No, not really
- Not at all
- Don't know

C4. Please describe your experience of communication or consultation during the regeneration process.

Open text

Section D. Perceived urban regeneration outcomes

Likert Scale: 1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree

D1. This regeneration project contributes to a stronger sense of community.

1 2 3 4 5

D2. What risks or challenges do you feel your community currently faces?

Select all that apply

- Rising housing costs or risk of displacement
- Loss of local identity or heritage
- Lack of affordable services or amenities
- Crime or safety concerns
- Environmental issues
- Limited job or training opportunities
- Social isolation or weakening community ties
- Other (please specify)

D3. Please describe the main impacts of regeneration on the local community.

Open text

Section E. Trust and long-term community change

E1. In your own words, what does "value" mean to you in your neighbourhood, and do you think this project delivered it?

Open text

E2. What issues or concerns do you most associate with the regeneration programme?

Open text

E3. What changes would you most like to see in the future development of the area?

Open text

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