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## **Productivity: No One-Size-Fits-All Solution**

When asked about productivity, conference speaker **Hannah Vickers, Global Head of Advisory and Productivity & Net Zero Lead for Mace and Construction Leadership Council** – claims there is not a one-size-fits-all solution.

We are in a period of things being heavily marketed to improve productivity – whether it be modern methods of construction (MMC) or different commercial arrangements. But productivity can vary massively depending on the client, the maturity of the market and the product itself.

These are the things that are really going to make a difference, because there are times when the answer isn't MMC, commercial relationships or alliancing.

I think the piece that we've not yet developed as an industry is actually being able to take a step back and judge things on a case-by-case basis. The single biggest issue for the industry is to grow its maturity and recognise that productivity is not a one-size-fits-all solution.

We have done some research on this with the Construction Leadership Council and we are able to now model what the best solution is depending on a particular project or a particular sector, because the answer is fundamentally different whether it's housing, commercial buildings or infrastructure.

## **Inputs Versus Outputs**

Another thing to highlight would be around understanding what the definition of productivity is – because productivity has two sides of the equation. It has the inputs versus the outputs.

Now that sounds quite obvious, but you can be more productive by using the same number of people and the same resources to deliver something which is lower carbon or has a longer design life.

People will interchange productivity with cheaper. It's not necessarily about being cheaper, it's about being better with the same level of resource. Success could involve using the same budget but delivering a lower carbon building that has a better EPC rating that you can rent out for more, and therefore is far more valuable for the developer or client in the long term.

Lastly, productivity involves understanding your own data and this is something we know and understand at Mace on the construction side. We have a baseline of where we are and can measure any improvements versus the investment required to make those improvements, and that has been quite a journey.

## **Measuring Productivity**

Getting a handle on your definitions of productivity and how you go about measuring it is something that I would really encourage all businesses to have a real think about in 2025.

Improved productivity at its heart is about driving out waste, whether that's material waste, wasting processes or wasting people's time. If you address all of those, you are inherently going to achieve lower carbon. You are going to be more sustainable because you are consuming fewer materials, you are going to be travelling less and polluting the environment less.

Where we have not quite got to yet is the maturity in the industry to say that if we focus on productivity, we will also be more sustainable. I worry that people at the moment are still of the view that sustainability is going to cost them. But if you are using fewer people, or if you are consuming fewer materials, you are far less exposed to those risks.

If we look ahead to what might happen with global tariffs and other economic hurdles, the world is only becoming more volatile, so anything that you can do to reduce your demand-side risk is going to be really valuable this year.