



## Surveying Change

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*A change in how landlords and tenants relate to each other is often cited as the elusive component in arriving at a workable green property agreement. Unexpectedly the current economic climate, instead of pushing agreement on green property objectives down the agenda, seems to be facilitating this change.*

The retail sector has faced a tough time over the last 18 months with a drop in consumer spending and difficult trading conditions. Some landlords reacted to the situation by introducing flexible rent arrangements to support beleaguered tenants, opening a realistic discussion with tenants and demonstrating a shared concern with the riding out of the economic storm. While not directly linked to sustainability this relationship change does introduce a fresh approach to issues and a greater scope for increased discussion over time on other property related issues.

More directly related to sustainability, the arrival of the CRC Energy Efficiency Scheme this April will increase the need for data gathering, monitoring and managing. While challenges remain, the process has begun which could eventually allow greater understanding for both landlord and tenant of where improvements can be made and efforts focused for mutual gain. The availability of increasingly efficient and simpler technology which requires better communication between landlord and tenant in order to be effective, points to the need for closer relationships. Potential penalties affecting both parties may be the initial driver for positive action; however a growing recognition of mutual reputational and financial gain as a result of responsible sustainable management is equally coming to the fore.

Relationships are improving. Concerns are being analysed from a shared viewpoint and building surveyors are at the heart of the transition, interpreting the changes, matching their knowledge and expertise to the green aspirations of landlords and tenants and identifying the best way forward.

TFT partner in charge of sustainability, Mat Lown, has recently completed an extensive green audit of The Heal's Building in London, an historic building with modern tenants and a landlord keen to participate effectively in the new green property future. In taking the property along the route to greater sustainability, benefits will be delivered to both landlord and tenants. This is the case with much front line sustainability advice and demonstrates how the surveyor can act as a bridge between the concerns and requirements of all parties in the emerging new green order.

Over the last twelve months the difficult economic climate has increased the need for all professionals involved in the market to look at how they can add value for their clients. One area has undoubtedly been through the provision of 'green' services. For us as surveyors to do this successfully it is important to ensure we continue to educate ourselves, open up the debate and keep up to date with changing technologies while remaining confident that sustainability is an exciting and energising development within our profession.

Building surveyors are in the perfect position to take a holistic view of a property, facilitate the needs of both landlord and tenant and analyse the property from both a practical and aspirational view point in order to continue to provide clear well informed advice.