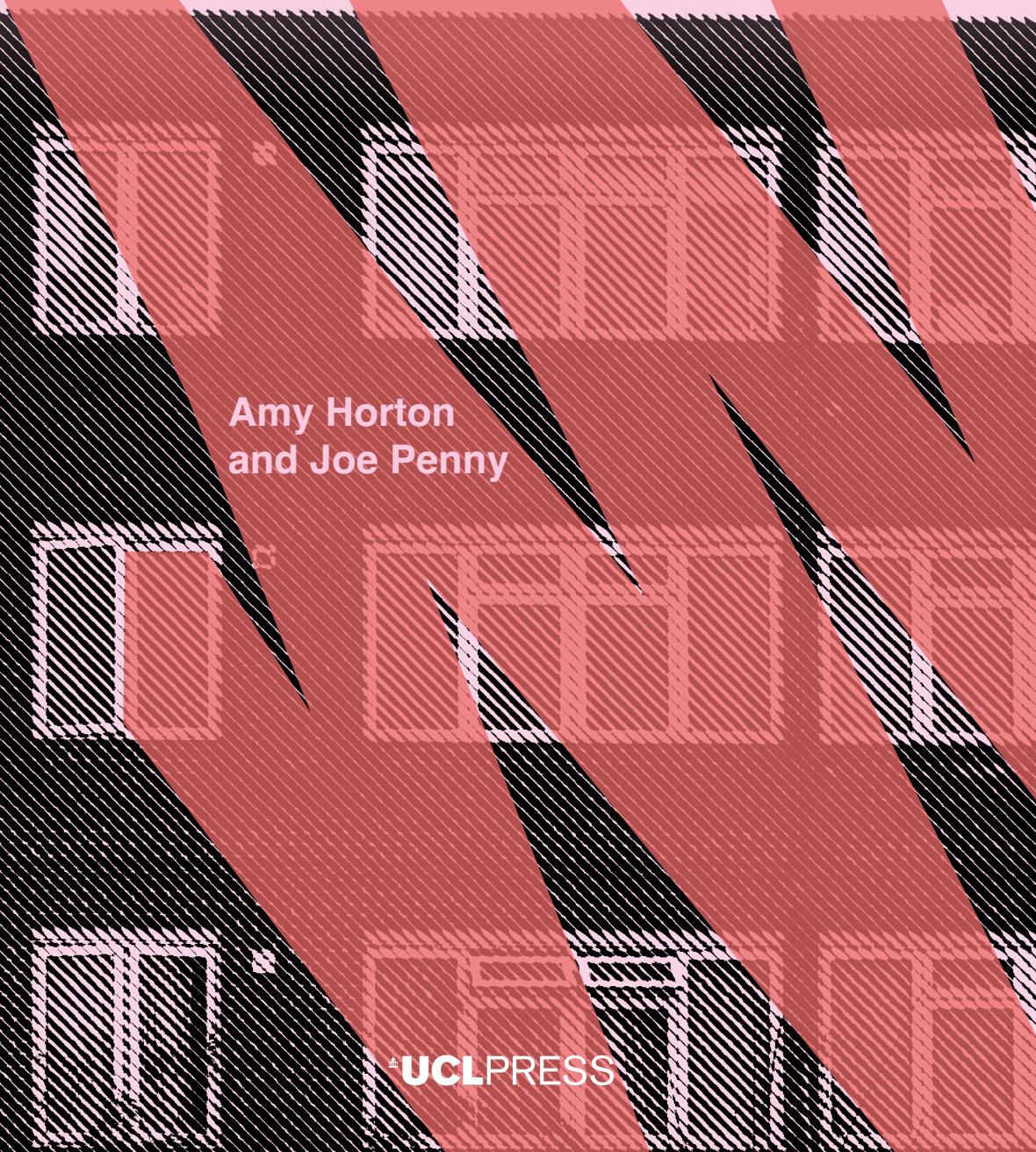
DISRUPTING THE SPECULATIVE CITY

Property, power and community resistance in London



Amy Horton
and Joe Penny

UCL PRESS

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Dedicated to the memory of Phil Jackson, who played a leading role in the campaign that stopped the Haringey Development Vehicle, saving thousands of council homes and other places from demolition.

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Note on authorship

Amy Horton and Joe Penny are equal authors of this work.

Timeline of key events

28 October 2015	Business Case outlining the Haringey Development Vehicle (HDV) is published
10 November 2015	Haringey Council Cabinet approves the HDV Business Case
6 July 2016	Shortlist of potential private-sector property development partners is announced at MIPIM property fair in Cannes, France
14 November 2016	Haringey Momentum calls on Labour to oppose the HDV
22 December 2016	Protest held outside Haringey Civic Centre while some councillors call for a delay and further scrutiny of the HDV
17 January 2017	Protest outside Haringey Civic Centre while councillors on the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel publish their interim report, expressing concerns about the plans
14 February 2017	Protest held outside Haringey Civic Centre as the council announces Lendlease as the preferred developer partner for the HDV
13 June 2017	Councillors on the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel publish their final report on the HDV, calling for a halt until a revised Business Case is presented which addresses concerns
3 July 2017	Protest march to Haringey Civic Centre but council confirms Lendlease as partner for the HDV
7 August 2017	Campaigners apply for a judicial review of the HDV
23 September 2017	Protest march to Finsbury Park
6 December 2017	Labour councillor candidate selections end with 45 to 12 against the HDV

30 January 2018	Council leader Claire Kober halts progress on the HDV until after local elections and announces she will step down
7 February 2018	Protest march to Haringey Civic Centre
8 February 2018	Judicial review concludes broadly in favour of the council
3 May 2018	Local elections
17 July 2018	Newly formed cabinet votes to scrap the HDV

1
Introduction

> Property developers were going to come in and smash up the heart of our community and all these people who had come in from different areas of the world over generations, who have put roots down here – they weren't in the picture, they were all going to be scattered to the wind. (Alison Davy, resident of Northumberland Park)

In 2011, an uprising began in Tottenham, north London, triggered by the police shooting of local resident Mark Duggan. Spreading across London and other major cities in England, it became 'one of the most significant events of civil unrest in recent British history' (Tyler 2013, 1). In the aftermath, authorities paid little attention to community concerns about decades of state violence against the area's racialised communities (LSE & *The Guardian* 2012). Instead, backed by real estate interests and politicians in regional and national office, leaders in local government responded with a neo-colonial vision for Tottenham. To capitalise on the 'riots' in a context of deepening austerity, they planned to remake this diverse working-class area from the ground up in the interests of real estate capital, the state and a wealthier class of investors and residents.

Devised in collaboration with property developers and landowners, the proposed transformation was driven by local government – specifically, the executive leadership of the Labour-led London Borough of Haringey – and backed by Conservative leaders in national government and London Mayor Boris Johnson. Their plans were on a grand scale and would have had a profound impact on Tottenham and the wider borough of Haringey. They would have transferred land, potentially worth billions of pounds, from public ownership to a joint venture, in which the council and a private developer would each have a 50 per cent stake. Blending public assets with private expertise and finance, this venture was called the Haringey Development Vehicle (HDV) (Figure 1.1). Joint ventures

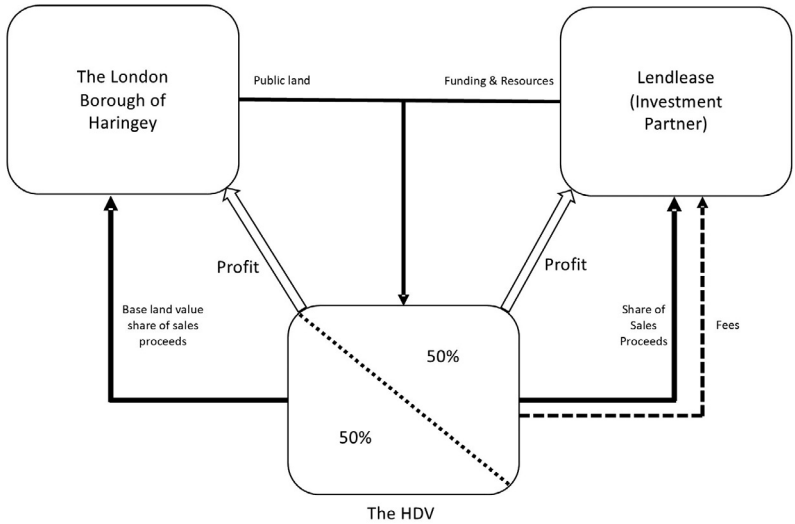


Figure 1.1 Haringey Development Vehicle – proposed structure, 2015 (authors' drawing, based on Haringey Council & Turnberry Real Estate 2015, 46).

have been used for urban development in London before. But never had a council planned to relinquish so much of its housing, its entire commercial portfolio and even its own headquarters in one deal.

The HDV was a speculative venture designed to drive up local real estate values and attract a less rebellious population. As the Business Case for the HDV put it, 'The Council owns a significant and diverse property portfolio within the Borough, including large residential estates . . . civic assets . . . and a significant investment commercial portfolio. However, *many of the sites within the Council's ownership suffer from: being in areas of deprivation; low land values . . . [and] underperformance*' (Haringey Council & Turnberry Real Estate 2015, 4, emphasis added). The HDV intended to demolish and replace these 'underperforming' assets with expensive residential and commercial real estate, and a public domain secured by a 'highly visible police presence' to 'ensure that businesses and new residents have the confidence to invest and become stakeholders in Tottenham's future' (Haringey Council & Tottenham Taskforce 2012, 42).

By hitching this land to London's booming property market, the local state[1] anticipated higher fiscal revenues. The vision was for new homes, mostly for private ownership at market prices, to bring in funds from sales, charges and taxes. New 'high-grade' commercial tenants were expected to pay more in business rates, while creating jobs and

local growth. A different 'social mix' was envisaged, with the so-called 'problem' populations living in low-cost housing dispersed around and outside the borough. Taken together, these changes would boost the council's income, cross-subsidise other public spending and reduce the welfare costs associated with a deprived population.

For the private partner in the venture, the council selected an international corporate developer with a controversial record on construction workers' rights and the destruction of social housing: Lendlease (Box 1.1).

Box 1.1: Lendlease

Lendlease is an Australian real estate developer that operates across a number of cities globally. Among many in these cities it has gained a poor reputation (Corporate Watch 2017). In New York City, Lendlease was found to have been overbilling clients for more than a decade, defrauding government agencies and private contractors of an estimated $19 million (Whitehouse 2012). The company agreed to pay $56 million in fines and restitutions (Katz 2012). Nearer to Haringey, in the London Borough of Southwark, Lendlease masterplanned the controversial redevelopment of Elephant and Castle, a low-income neighbourhood known for its diverse and vibrant migrant traders and working-class communities. This redevelopment entailed the demolition of the Heygate housing estate, with its 1,194 council homes, which provided security of tenure and rents significantly below market rates. The Heygate has been replaced with 2,500 new homes, only around 100 of which are homes for social rent (Flynn 2016; Lees & Ferreri 2016; Ferreri 2020).

Although the HDV was unique in scale and scope, the story so far tells of a familiar process across London and other cities globally (Lees et al. 2016). It crystallises an economic and political approach to urban development, state financing and urban citizenship-making that we call the 'speculative city'. Working in concert with finance and real estate capital, state actors seek to raise and extract land values, while foreclosing dissent through classed and racialised dispossession. For diverse working-class neighbourhoods, the slow violence of decades of denigration and disinvestment is followed by the quicker brutality of demolition and displacement. The HDV would have transformed swathes of north London and set an influential precedent for property developers, local government and communities across the city and beyond. This happens so often, across so many urban contexts, that it can seem an immutable script.

But in Tottenham a coalition of diverse communities formed to flip that script and disrupt the speculative city. To defend their Tottenham, tenants and traders, community activists, trade unionists and some local councillors united in a grassroots campaign called StopHDV. From their perspective, the land and buildings targeted by the HDV were not financial assets in the making; they were unique socio-economic infrastructures that should remain democratically controlled. These were the places in which they lived, worked, socialised and supported one another, fundamental to survival and social life, especially for Black and migrant communities (Hall 2011; Horton & Penny 2023). Together the campaigners held public meetings, knocked on hundreds of doors, submitted countless Freedom of Information requests, protested in the streets, disrupted council meetings, crowdfunded legal action and deposed sitting councillors.

People rejected speculative development on multiple grounds. There was the prospect of losing their homes, businesses and social worlds, and there was opposition to the 'social cleansing' of Black and migrant working classes in favour of whiter, wealthier investors and residents. They had deep concerns about the council's ability to navigate major financial risks and avoid being outplayed by Lendlease in what they dubbed a '£2 billion gamble'. And they believed that 'wholesale demolition is an extreme waste of money and materials . . . detrimental to the neighbourhood and the environment' (HPAG 2017, s. 5).

In 2018, facing intense opposition, the council abandoned its plans. The defeat of the HDV was a significant victory for local campaigners. It represents an inspirational refusal of corporate-municipal accumulation by dispossession – the appropriation of public and common goods for profit by private and state actors (Harvey 2003).

Aims of the book

This book is for people interested in stories of successful resistance in London, for those concerned with how speculative real estate interests are remaking our cities, and for anyone fighting for more socially and ecologically just urban futures.

Seeking to present an authentic people's history, we recount the struggle over the HDV – traversing lavish encounters between councillors and investors aboard yachts in Cannes, community theatre in Tottenham, uproar in the council chamber and tension in the Royal Courts of Justice. Although these events attracted extensive media coverage at the time, they

were (with some notable exceptions) misrepresented or misunderstood by mainstream accounts. A skewed narrative about the campaign has since formed, which shapes recollections of the struggle. It obscures the motivations and politics of ordinary people in Haringey, reducing the campaign to a local instance of a national struggle over the Labour Party's 'soul' spearheaded by Momentum, the movement set up to support Jeremy Corbyn as party leader and advance democratic socialism. The political and economic context in which Corbyn and Momentum rose to prominence did contribute to events in Haringey. But the campaign against the HDV was first and foremost a local effort by a broad coalition to protect public housing, everyday economies and diverse working-class livelihoods.

In this book, we also hope to offer insights and inspiration for people challenging attempts by states and investors to pursue development through displacement. Speculative urban redevelopment can feel like an unstoppable global force. But we show how local state actors initiated the HDV, and locally led organising disrupted it. By explaining how and why StopHDV was successful, we present strategies and reflections for other communities and movements to adapt and deploy depending on their usefulness in different contexts. Focusing on the arguments, actions and achievements of the campaigners, we draw out lessons that might be of use to others working against exclusionary processes and dispossessive outcomes and towards fairer and more democratic urban futures. This material adds to ongoing and vital exchanges between critical councillors, housing activists and wider networks. While recognising the unique characteristics of the HDV, and the specific time and place in which the struggle over it occurred, we believe there is much to learn from how this grassroots campaign derailed the extractive plans of the local state, property developers and finance capital.

More than a local story, the struggle over the HDV reflects a systemic trend in the political economy of urban development across cities globally. Amid the economic turmoil following the global financial crisis of 2008, 'rapidly escalating housing prices, variegated processes of gentrification, increasing levels of displacement, and the emergence of "housing wars", typify a number of . . . cities across the world' (Goetz 2016, 2). The speculative city is now an internationally recognisable and, for some, desired form of urban policy. In many places, 'Land speculation and active dispossession of those working and living . . . on land upon which the new world-city projects are being built, is the main business of government today' (Goldman 2011, 555). Across different contexts, there are parallels in how the local state appropriates land for development, aiming to expand state capacity and fund public expenditure.

In this book, based on the case of the HDV, we critique the means and implications of this speculative and extractive approach to urban development, including within the local state. Building on this critique, and on the reflections of our interviewees, we also explore how to create more just and sustainable forms of community preservation and urban renewal.

The speculative city

We develop the concept of the 'speculative city' to make sense of the dynamics, stakes and contested politics of the HDV (Chu & He 2022; Fields 2023; Goldman 2011; Goldman & Narayan 2021; Robinson & Attuyer 2021; Shin 2016; Sood 2019). In the speculative city, the inflation and capture of land values has become an overriding objective, not only for global financial investors and international real estate developers, but also for state institutions, especially city and local governments.

Under conditions of constrained autonomy, local state actors collaborate with finance and real estate interests to monetise and extract value from publicly owned land and the wider urban environment. Their aim is to maximise financial returns from public land and real estate in the form of state revenues – or 'fiscal rents' (Haila 2016). In contexts of 'austerity urbanism' (Peck 2012), where most central state funding to urban and local governments has been choked off, extracting land values provides an alternative means for the local state to govern and reshape places. It does so by producing built environments and social infrastructures to attract 'desirable' citizens and economic activities, while actively marginalising and displacing 'undesirable' others, guided by exclusionary and racialised visions of the 'world-class city'.

We challenge claims that the speculative city is a progressive endeavour. Its proponents have argued that unlocking land values can fund local public spending, deliver new, improved housing and boost job creation. However, the speculative city is founded on municipal and corporate accumulation by dispossession and domicide. Accumulation by dispossession is a concept developed by David Harvey (2003) to express how private profits and state financing are pursued through the commodification of public or common goods – which is to say, turning such goods into products to be sold in markets. In short, private and state actors accumulate wealth by dispossessing others of their collective resources. More concretely, the speculative city terminates public and common ownership, drives up property prices beyond the reach of

working-class inhabitants and businesses, and causes displacement. By inflating property prices, the speculative city also structures economic distribution towards the owners of assets at the expense of others – for example, through rising rents to landlords (Adkins et al. 2020).

The term 'domicide' captures the 'deliberate destruction of home by human agency' (Porteous & Smith 2001, 12) in both extreme contexts (such as war, colonialism and apartheid) and more everyday forms, including the demolition of housing estates (Elliott-Cooper et al. 2020; Watt 2021). In the restless pursuit of the next 'real estate frontier' (Gillespie 2020, 612), the homes and social infrastructures of working-class inhabitants are destroyed, their communities disrupted and dislocated. The trauma of being ripped from home, community and place endures long after relocation (Fullilove 2004; Nowicki 2023).

In the speculative city, dispossession and domicide are classed, racialised and gendered processes. In London, land targeted for redevelopment typically hosts existing social housing, community facilities, low-cost workspaces and diverse commercial centres. The loss of these places reverberates disproportionately along intersecting axes of socio-economic differentiation. At best, local state actors have sometimes attempted to mitigate the dispossessive and unequal effects of the speculative city, unevenly and usually unsuccessfully. More often, however, they justify speculative redevelopment by denigrating existing places and communities as economically unproductive and anti-social, undermining their place in the city and marginalising vital socio-economic infrastructures. As a process of capital accumulation and a political project of urban citizenship-making, the speculative city is made possible through this social differentiation.

The speculative city is an unstable, undemocratic and unsustainable form of urban governance. Unstable, as it ties the fiscal future of the local state to volatile property markets that are deeply and unpredictably entwined with global forces. Undemocratic, as it fuses urban government to powerful corporate and financial institutions that seek to evade public scrutiny and stymy collective decision-making. And unsustainable, as the speculative city is predicated upon demolishing popular built environments to make space for new developments catering to the carbon-intensive lifestyles of wealthy elites (Environmental Audit Committee 2022; Rice et al. 2020).

The speculative city is both global and grounded. It is a global urban phenomenon in that it is driven in no small part by political-economic dynamics, flows and actors that operate across a diverse range of contexts, with some predictable outcomes. Yet it 'can *always*

and *everywhere* only be understood as embedded in specific institutional contexts' (Bernt 2022, 8, emphasis in original). The politics and cultures of particular places at particular times explain how, why and with what consequences the speculative city is produced. Crucially, they also shape how the speculative city can be disrupted.

This book is grounded in 2010s London and the HDV as one case study of the speculative city. Building on work by other researchers and activists, we situate the speculative city in London within the following multi-scalar processes: the extraction of value from the urban built environment; the remaking of the state and its relationship with speculative investment in real estate; and the devaluing of particular people, places and social infrastructures.

The urban political economy of capital accumulation

The speculative city reflects an economic transformation in which urban development and property markets have become a central engine of capital accumulation, though in globally uneven ways (Lefebvre 2003; Merrifield 2014; Soederberg 2020). The shift of most manufacturing from the Global North to the South since the 1970s reduced the role of producing and trading goods as a source of economic growth and profits in countries such as the UK. Instead, profits have become more dependent on financial activities, including through the creation and capture of assets and rents, especially from property in metropoles like London (Adkins et al. 2020). Writing at the cusp of this shift in the mid-1970s, Henri Lefebvre anticipated the coming 'Urban Revolution' as a phase of capitalist development in which 'real estate becomes the principal source for the formation of capital' (Lefebvre 2003, 160).

While urban land and property have long cycled through boom and bust under capitalism (Harvey 1983), the globalisation of real estate trading from the 1980s has caused staggering quantities of capital to flow into a select few urban regions in search of yield-generating assets. Huge financial funds have formed an apparent tidal wave of capital flowing into urban environments. In 2017, as the HDV was due to be signed off, the value of global real estate assets reached US$280.6 trillion, the highest figure ever recorded (Tostevin 2018). Real estate is now the most significant store of global wealth, outstripping investments in financial instruments such as equities and securities, as well as commodities like gold (Stein 2019).

Technological and organisational innovations in the financial and real estate sectors have facilitated faster and larger-scale trading and investment in real estate. State action and policy at all scales have also

played an important role in generating these shifts, often by de-risking financial investment in urban regions and real estate. Taken together, this 'increasing role of financial markets, institutions and motives in the world economy' is termed financialisation (Epstein 2005, 3). In varying forms financialisation has been well documented across different urban contexts (Ashton et al. 2016; Beswick et al. 2016; Çelik 2023; Fields & Uffer 2016; Gillespie 2020; Rolnik 2019; Sanfelici & Halbert 2016; Scheba 2023; Wu et al. 2022).

As part of this 'urban revolution', international investors compete to develop and acquire land, including commercial and residential property. Consequently, the value of financialised urban assets has been inflated far beyond growth in wages or productivity. This is playing havoc with urban life. It is intensifying inequalities between places, and between people who depend on wages for survival and those who are rich in assets. It is fuelling more wildly speculative cycles of boom and bust, foreclosing opportunities for collective, democratic decision-making. And it is wasting built environments at the expense of a globally habitable climate.

Since the 2008 global financial crisis, an especially sharp polarisation has emerged across urban contexts: between real estate boom and public spending bust. In an effort to limit the recessionary impacts of the 2008 global financial crisis, many central banks promoted cheap credit by cutting interest rates close to zero and pumping new money into

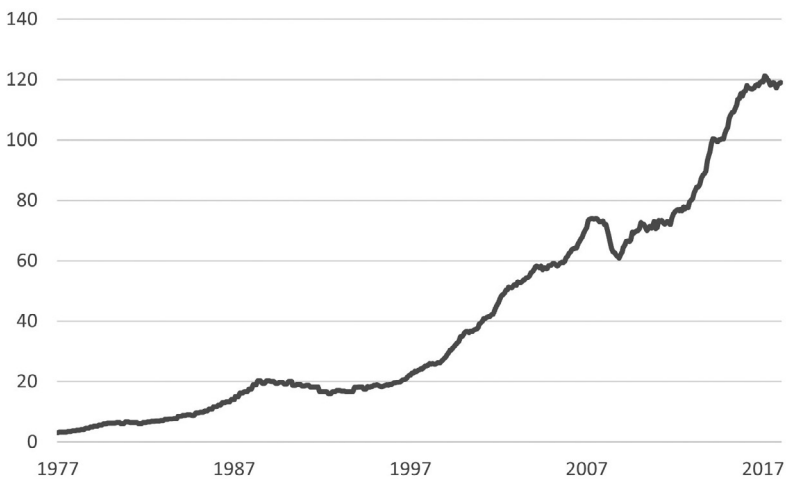


Figure 1.2 Property price inflation in London, 1977–2017. London housing price inflation surged before the financial crisis of 2007 and accelerated again in the mid-2010s. Source: Land Registry. Contains public sector information licensed under Open Government Licence v3.0.

economies through quantitative easing. With other sectors struggling to recover from the crisis, much of this credit poured into property, especially in global hotspots such as London, where tax treatment is favourable and assets are seen as effectively risk-free (Fernandez et al. 2016). Consequently, house prices and rents surged (Figure 1.2).

Council and social housing estates were partly sheltered from market inflation, leading to widening 'rent gaps' between actual and potential revenues from public real estate. Alongside affordable workspaces, they have been targeted as a frontier for gentrification and displacement (Lees & Ferreri 2016; Ferm & Jones 2017; Taylor 2021). Rather than seeking to defend these socio-economic infrastructures, policy-makers have treated them as financial assets to be commodified and speculated on in the pursuit of fiscal rents (Penny 2022; Bloom 2023). In the property-based economy, diverse working-class communities are rendered surplus to and displaceable from the city.

Remaking the local state

The local state has not been a passive observer, or victim, of these global political-economic forces. On the contrary, local state actors across a variety of international contexts have been an important agent in facilitating – and more recently driving – speculative, extractive and anti-democratic approaches to land and housing. Not only has the state supported private investment in the built environment, it has also come to depend fiscally on capturing its own share of that value. In Gavin Shatkin's (2017) words, the local state is transforming as part of a global 'real estate turn' in urban politics, in which local state capacities have become increasingly dependent on the successful inflation and monetisation of land and property values. Writing about New York City, Sam Stein has coined the term 'real estate state' to describe 'a political formation in which real estate capital has an inordinate influence over the shape of our cities, the parameters of our politics and the lives we lead' (Stein 2019, 5). The real estate state is a mode of statecraft, especially at the urban and municipal scales, which shapes the parameters of politics in the interests of real estate and financial capital.

In England, this transformation of the state stretches back to the 1980s, when Margaret Thatcher's administration stripped local authorities of power and funding. By giving tenants the right to buy their council homes at substantial discounts, the government unleashed mass privatisation of council homes while limiting local authorities' ability to finance new building (Hodkinson 2019). Driven by a powerful property lobby of landowners, house builders and financial investors

(Colenutt 2020), local authorities were also encouraged, and at times coerced, by the national state to transfer public assets out of public ownership and control. In recent years, local authorities have been required to identify and sell off so-called 'surplus' land and maximise the value of their holdings – an agenda encouraged by the rapidly inflating property market (Christophers 2018). Starved of maintenance funding, they have also been pushed into transferring housing stock to independent housing associations (Watt 2009).

As a result of these policies, the local state has ceased to be a significant housebuilder in England. Instead, its role has shifted to that of enabler, often working to de-risk development projects on behalf of investors and ensure generous profit margins. Thus, local authorities have become dependent on private developers to build housing and cross-subsidise units at below-market rates. Levies on new development have funded some 'affordable housing' (costing up to 80 per cent of market rate) and local improvements. But these are a matter of negotiation between councils and powerful property firms at the planning stage – and subject to renegotiation according to market conditions. Veiled in secrecy under the guise of commercial confidentiality, and governed by national planning regulations that ensure the financial viability of schemes is prioritised over public planning principles, these (re)negotiations have tended to erode promised social outcomes (Flynn 2016).

Since 2010, changes to local government funding have made councils increasingly dependent on raising and releasing land values. In the wake of the 2008 global financial crisis, public spending cuts were justified as a temporary belt-tightening exercise to stabilise the national economy, accompanied by a moral discourse that stigmatised precarious communities as 'skivers' burdening higher-earning, productive 'strivers' (Valentine & Harris 2014). The long-term project, however, was one of remaking the state, and especially the local state. Between 2010 and 2020, successive Conservative-led governments dismantled spatially redistributive grant funding for local government, financed through general taxation and allocated based on an area's social need. In its place, they established a competitive sink-or-swim regime that compels local councils to increase the size and value of their council tax and business rate base (Hastings et al. 2017). Constrained in their powers to introduce new taxes, the local state is incentivised to facilitate private developments that 'produce and capture as much value as possible from the built environment' (Robinson & Attuyer 2021, 326). In practice, this means permitting high-density blocks of small, unaffordable apartments, often marketed and sold off-plan overseas.

The 'real estate state' in London has taken a further turn in recent years, responding to both austerity and the problems of relying on cross-subsidy from private sector-led development. Put simply, the local state has sought to get in on the speculative game itself (Penny 2022; Bloom 2023). Rather than selling public land outright, councils have entered numerous joint ventures with private partners, including capital and pension funds, and have created their own real estate development companies, to secure long-term returns – as in the HDV. The stated goal of such ventures is to finance collective service provision through speculative land and real estate development. But this ties state fortunes and urban development more tightly to financial and property markets, and to negotiations with powerful private developers. It also shapes the relationship between state and citizens through classed and 'racially-differentiated modalities of dispossession and displacement' (Clare et al. 2022, 3). The local state adopts towards its citizens either a logic of expulsion – regularly linked to the denigration of existing places, their populations and social infrastructures – or a logic of profit-maximising landlordism. Fundamentally, these speculative logics and relations contradict efforts to secure social gain from the extraction of land value.

Speculative social cleansing and racialised dispossession

Extracting land value through redevelopment often depends on diminishing the perceived value of existing land uses. Places are subject to the slow violence of material disinvestment and neglect (Smith 2010). Alongside this runs the symbolic violence of discursive negation whereby territories are marked as dangerous or failed places. These processes serve to justify the privatisation of public assets and urban commons.

This process of denigrating certain places (and by extension the people who live in those places) is known as territorial stigmatisation (Wacquant 2007), in reference to the ways in which disinvested neighbourhoods are represented – by the words and deeds of politicians, bureaucrats, private actors and ordinary residents in everyday life – as tainted, threatening and/or dysfunctional. Obscuring diverse and complex lived realities, territorial stigmatisation distorts representations of places. Labelled 'sink estates' or 'shit holes', over time, in the eyes of many, this is what they become. Importantly, the purpose of territorial stigmatisation is to tarnish and blame those who live in these neighbourhoods for their perceived failures and to create a powerful rationale for 'renewal' or gentrification and social cleansing (Slater 2021).

Core to these processes, though often overlooked in British urban scholarship (Lees & Hubbard 2022), are practices which categorise groups of people into socially constructed hierarchies 'marked by race, nation, geographical origins, and gender' (Lowe 1996, 27). As much as the speculative city is driven to accumulate and close 'rent gaps' on public land, it is also catalysed, legitimised and made possible by socially constructed hierarchies of difference. It is, like capitalism as a social order more generally, inherently racialised and racialising (Virdee 2019). The urban spaces that public and private partners seek to expropriate and extract value from are often those that are produced by, and supportive of, diverse or racialised working-class communities. By denigrating and delegitimising the urban social infrastructures and everyday economies of these 'racially subordinated groups' (Bhattacharyya 2018, 42), elite actors rationalise the displacement of marginalised groups and the destruction of their social space. These 'anti-Black' spatial imaginaries constitute the dispossessive grounds upon which speculative financial and fiscal accumulation is realised under racial capitalism (Bledsoe & Wright 2019; Dantzler, 2021).

More concretely, Commonwealth citizens and subsequent migrants from 1949 were excluded from post-war social housing in the UK and pushed into especially exploitative segments of the private rental sector or into creating autonomous housing squats (Begum 2023; Ferreri 2023). From the 1960s, when granted access to public housing, they were 'racially steered' into poorer quality estates that were then further marginalised by media stigmatisation and state disinvestment (Ndu 2022). Racialised difference was also reproduced in job markets and the wider welfare state (McDowell 2015). Territorial stigmatisation has often intensified in response to diverse working-class mobilisations and alternative ways of organising and inhabiting urban space (Kipfer 2022; Sevilla-Buitrago 2022). Invoking 'race riots' to justify redevelopment has a long history in the UK: 'contemporary urban regeneration itself emerged due to race-based stigma often innately entangled with class-based stereotypes' (Ndu 2022, 46). Since the 1960s, in the aftermath of conflict in Notting Hill at the end of the previous decade, national urban policy has tended to take a place-based approach to poverty. It has targeted 'problem' neighbourhoods, rather than tackling structural relations of intersecting class and race inequalities (Ndu 2022). After a series of uprisings in the 1980s in Tottenham, Brixton, Toxteth and elsewhere, unrest was framed in colonial and eugenicist terms as the work of 'backward' 'natives' whose 'genetic and racial' deficiencies defined the 'urban ghetto', in the words of then cabinet minister Geoffrey Howe (Beach 2018).

The result of such rhetoric is that property-led regeneration (or state-led gentrification), accompanied by intensive over-policing, has become a powerful urban policy doxa targeting territorially stigmatised, and racialised, neighbourhoods (Elliott-Cooper 2021; Renwick & Shilliam 2022). By positioning their populations as 'unable to adequately occupy or administer space', decision-takers and policy-makers render these places 'available for appropriation' (Bledsoe & Wright 2019, 15).

In order to entice a new class of urban citizenry, government and their private sector partners produce socio-economic infrastructures of private housing, 'creative' workspaces, corporate retail and commodified leisure. These social infrastructures, in which people can gather and connect, are often presented as a self-evident good. But they are embedded within, and express, unequal power relations. Exclusive infrastructures are an important tool for inflating land values and may do more to fragment cities than support social connection and shared experiences of citizenship (Graham & Marvin 2001; Horton & Penny 2023). New spaces are designed for the ideal citizens of the speculative city – high-earning professionals able to afford market-rate property and associated council tax, while animating a local economy of higher-value consumption. The creation of new elite social infrastructure is trailed as encouraging 'social mixing' between existing and incoming residents. But when embedded in stigmatising assumptions and without broader changes to address entrenched inequalities, new districts are likely to experience the kind of 'economic apartheid' observed in gentrifying Brixton, south London (Anchor & Magnet 2013 in Lees 2016).

The language of (neo)colonisation has been used in critical urban scholarship to describe the influx of middle classes to working-class neighbourhoods and the accompanying economic and cultural changes (Smith 1996). Yet, writing in the settler-colonial Canadian context, Lesley Kern observes that 'few urban geographers have paused to consider how gentrification and other modes of urban development are non-metaphorical extensions of colonization as they buttress the historical displacement of Indigenous peoples through colonial city building and ongoing practices of marginalization and dispossession in space today' (Kern 2022, 15). In London, speculative redevelopment has targeted places strongly shaped by imperial legacies of immigration, culture, inequalities and resistance (Danewid 2020). Peoples descended from places that were subject to colonisation now face new rounds of appropriation and 'neo-colonial forms of counter-revolution' (Kipfer 2022, 207) in the post-imperial metropole. As Addie and Fraser note, 'the desire to redevelop urban areas is not solely a manifestation of

political-economic restructuring, it is also a spatial and racial project to reimagine the city and whom cities are for' (Addie & Fraser 2019, 1373). In Tottenham, these were inextricably linked.

Disrupting the speculative city

Driven by powerful alliances of state actors, property companies and investors, 'the machinery of redevelopment is seldom stopped' (Goetz 2016, 3). In the US, hundreds of thousands of homes in public housing projects have been demolished since the early 1990s. Redevelopment has followed broadly similar lines across much of Europe, Canada, Australia and New Zealand (Goetz 2016). In a study of 14 social housing estates targeted for 'comprehensive regeneration' from the late 1990s in London, demolition was only prevented entirely in one case (Watt 2021).

Even *attempts* to stop speculative redevelopment tend to be limited. A range of reasons help to explain muted resistance: some residents welcome redevelopment, expecting to benefit; others accept it reluctantly, seeking to secure the best rehousing option and avoid reprisals from decision-makers; often, there is a fatalistic accommodation to regeneration's inevitability (August 2016). These responses are conditioned by the power relations governing redevelopment: it is a carefully managed process, with very little space for meaningful tenant and community influence.

Moreover, to take part in campaigns challenging regeneration, people need time, relationships, knowledge and confidence; these are unequally distributed spatially and among social groups, who are unevenly treated as legitimate or not by authorities. Irregular working hours and caring responsibilities can make participation close to impossible for some, while some in minoritised groups may be reluctant to take part in tactics that place them in close proximity to police or punitive migration regimes. Geographer and former Tottenham resident Tia Ndu has investigated why regeneration and accompanying gentrification have not been resisted more directly on the Broadwater Farm estate in recent years. She found that most of the estate's residents were focused on surviving the socio-economic impacts of gentrification – prioritising their livelihoods or seeking to find more affordable private rentals. Those experiences, and involvement in collective resistance to gentrification, were crucially shaped by 'intersecting stigmatisations' linked to place, race, class, gender and age (Ndu 2022, 25). Yet, as the StopHDV campaign demonstrated, speculative development is not inevitable and can be disrupted through persistent, organised and creative resistance.

The StopHDV campaign was formed in the wake of an international wave of efforts to disrupt the speculative city as post-crisis polarisation – of real estate boom and public spending bust – galvanised resistance from below. From 2008, amid imposed austerity, intensifying urban exclusion and punitive state repression, social movements erupted globally. Expressing popular dissent, movements such as the Indignados, Occupy and the Gezi revolt, among many others, took direct action by occupying public space, staging protests and blocking evictions (Erensü & Karaman 2017; García-Lamarca 2017; Dikeç & Swyngedouw 2017). Political scientist Margit Mayer sees these movements as a turning point for cross-class activism, as they brought together 'a (racialized) "global proletariat" and progressive or radical (often middle-class-based) activists' (Mayer 2013, 14). Such alliances were partial and riven with tensions. But they played an important role in resisting the speculative city and pointing to alternative urban futures. They spread 'a more radical critique of financial and political power' and popularised 'direct democratic and prefigurative organizing styles' (Mayer 2013, 14), such as consensus decision-making in assemblies in public squares. In doing so, they were precursors to StopHDV.

In London, the depth and pervasiveness of housing injustice, especially following the global financial crisis, encouraged an effervescence of housing activism (Watt & Minton 2016). This 'new politics of housing-related activism' saw private, social and council housing tenants organising in estate campaigns, renters' unions, mutual aid groups and city-wide networks 'as a response to neoliberalisation, austerity and state-led gentrification' (Watt 2021, 342–3). StopHDV emerged out of and formed an important part of these infrastructures of resistance to gentrification, or social cleansing. Campaigners gained much in insight, solidarity and tactics from other housing campaigns and networks across London (Figure 1.3). In turn, their victory has become a source of inspiration for similar struggles for decommodified and democratised urban futures.

This grassroots resistance to inequality and austerity also helped to produce the conditions in which Jeremy Corbyn, a left-wing democratic socialist, became leader of the Labour Party in 2015. Over the following four years, institutional left politics became an important terrain of organising, visible in the surge in Labour Party membership and activism during this time. The StopHDV campaign was buoyed by the revival of local Labour Party branches and used them as part of a decisive effort to undermine the executive political leadership of the council.

But StopHDV was not simply a lightning rod channelling wider energies; it was also a product of local organising and place-based activist cultures. Haringey has a rich set of 'inherited movement cultures and organisations' (Mayer 2017, 299) around housing, anti-racism and social justice. Many of the organisers of StopHDV were part of local housing, community and campaign groups, trade union branches and various political parties. They brought valuable experience, relationships and resources to the coalition. Whereas the 'integrative structures' of party and union have withered in many places (Bennett & Segerberg 2013), they were strong enough in Haringey to contribute to organising. This

Figure 1.3 March against the demolition of the Cressingham Gardens estate in Lambeth, south London, December 2017, in which several StopHDV campaigners participated. Photo: Gordon Peters.

experience was complemented in the campaign by many people who previously had not been politically active but who were moved to defend Haringey as a home to diverse working-class communities. The result was a broad-based popular coalition that appealed to people across social divides, different party loyalties and various degrees of activist experience. This openness and diversity gave StopHDV the legitimacy and capacity to tackle the speculative city across a range of institutional, popular, legal and electoral channels.

At stake in struggles against the speculative city are conflicting visions for the politics of the local state. From its inception, the HDV expressed a top-down, paternalistic and technocratic politics, reminiscent of English 'municipal Labourism'. According to this politics, local state power should rest with 'politically moderate' representatives, 'professional' officers, 'expert' consultants and, increasingly, private sector partners. Together they should administer services *to* and *for* the local population in pursuit of economic growth (Gyford 1985; Beveridge & Cochrane 2023).

This politics was met by StopHDV campaigners with calls instead for bottom-up styles of collective decision-making that mobilise diverse working-class urban communities to defend and further their interests in and against the local state. Here, they drew on a municipal politics rooted in the 'new social movements' and New Urban Left of the 1960s to 1980s, which sought to transform the top-down paternalism of the Fordist-Keynesian local state (Gyford 1985; Mayer 2013). Articulating anti-racist, anti-homophobic, feminist and broadly democratic socialist politics, the New Urban Left envisioned an open and responsive local state built from below, acting as a platform for social movements to shape democratic decision-making, local economic development and anti-discriminatory and liberatory endeavours (Blackburn 2020). Seeking to create space for more grassroots, autonomist action, the aim was to plant 'a politics of contestation within the state machine' (Beveridge & Cochrane 2023, 9). In Haringey, campaigners – some of whom had been active in the New Urban Left – riffed on this radically democratic municipal politics, as well as Occupy and anti-austerity discourses and practices, in how they organised against the HDV. Confronting the lack of official, institutionalised opportunities to voice dissent, they adopted a 'contentious politics' of street demonstrations and other disruptive tactics (Tilly & Tarrow 2015).

In considering how to disrupt the speculative city, we recognise that the state is not monolithic. Dissenting elements can be crucial allies to grassroots movements. While many formal spaces of participation

– such as consultations and hearings – are designed to procure consent for redevelopment (Miraftab 2009), they can also be subverted and reinvented to serve opposition. A small group of critical councillors became committed to stopping the HDV. They collaborated with campaigners in the community to transform council meetings and candidate selection processes into opportunities for exerting public pressure. Their challenge to the speculative city had one foot in the state and the other in the streets, pursuing institutional and insurgent forms of action in tandem and switching strategically between them.

What are the alternatives to the 'false choice urbanism' (Slater 2021) in which communities face either disinvestment and decline, or speculative redevelopment and displacement? To move beyond the speculative city we need to break the local state's reliance on speculative redevelopment. Finance-dominated economies are being challenged by workplace struggles and by wider movements to recognise and strengthen diverse, caring economies (see, for example, Taylor 2020). Mobilisations against austerity – in the community, the public sector and political parties – have confronted the fiscal structures that help create the 'real estate state' (Jupp 2022). Meanwhile, 'new municipalist' movements are experimenting with more democratic ways of governing common assets and protecting them from extractive regimes (Russell et al. 2022; Thompson 2021). Anti-racist organising is also exposing the socially constructed hierarchies that underpin the speculative city and pushing for action to address inequalities (Ishkanian & Ali 2018). In doing so, activists build on a rich history of opposing injustice and creating alternative socio-economic infrastructures.

Situating the HDV

The main events discussed in this book took place in the London Borough of Haringey. Sandwiched between inner and outer London boroughs (Figure 1.4), Haringey extends from the edge of Hampstead Heath, over the wealthy peaks of Highgate, Muswell Hill and Alexandra Palace, downhill to the council headquarters in Wood Green and across to Tottenham in the east, bordered by the river Lea and its marshlands (Figure 1.5).

The HDV intended to remake the east of the borough. Here, the residential areas and industrial pockets of Northumberland Park surround the giant Tottenham Hotspur football stadium, which opened in 2019. Along the High Road, running north to south, are rows of small

Figure 1.4 London's boroughs, including Haringey in the north, 2016. Source: Office for National Statistics licensed under Open Government Licence v.3.0, 2016.

Figure 1.5 Haringey's council wards – local electoral districts – in 2016. The areas of Tottenham and Wood Green would have been most affected by the HDV. Source: Office for National Statistics licensed under Open Government Licence v.3.0, Council ward boundaries 2016.

shops, many of them run by and serving London's migrant communities, plus the Wards Corner Latin American market at Seven Sisters, where controversial redevelopment plans were scrapped in 2021 following years of determined trader and community resistance.

Haringey is a deeply unequal and geographically divided borough. In the west are some of London's richest areas, while there is severe poverty in the east (Haringey Council 2015b) (Figure 1.6). The borough was the fourth most deprived in London in 2019 (Haringey Council 2023b) and includes some of the most deprived parts of the country. Many of the borough's working-class residents live in social housing, although that share has been falling (from 29 per cent in 2016 to 22 per cent in 2019), while private rentals have risen to more than a third of all tenures (Haringey Council 2023b). As is common across much of London, Tottenham's stock of genuinely affordable council housing includes a number of modernist estates built in the post-war era, such as Broadwater Farm, Northumberland Park and Love Lane. Communities here have faced decades of territorial stigmatisation and managed decline. Structural and institutional racism have fuelled two major urban uprisings in Tottenham. The first of these took place at Broadwater Farm council estate in 1985, after the death of 49-year-old Cynthia Jarrett during a police search of her home. The second started along Tottenham High Road in 2011, following the fatal police shooting of Mark Duggan.

Of the borough's 250,000 residents in 2011, about a third were White British, a quarter Other White ethnicities and a fifth Black (Haringey Council 2012). In Tottenham, almost 80 per cent of residents were from Black and minority ethnic groups (Haringey Council 2015b), including a long-standing Afro-Caribbean population and Somali, Kurdish and Eastern European migrants (Visser 2020).

Tottenham has a deep tradition of Black activism and culture. In 1985, Haringey became one of the first London councils to have a Black leader. Bernie Grant, a migrant from then-British Guiana, established the Black Trade Unionists Solidarity Movement, advanced Black representation and anti-racist organising within the Labour Party and in 1987 became one of the first four Black members of parliament. During this period, residents of Broadwater Farm organised to prevent the demolition of their estate, confronting institutionalised racism, inadequate maintenance and concentrated disadvantage. Against the state's 'organised negligence' (Renwick & Shilliam 2022), the community developed its own social infrastructures, such as the Youth Association, which ran a social club, provided meals to older residents and established cooperatives and a child day care centre, gaining some influence over

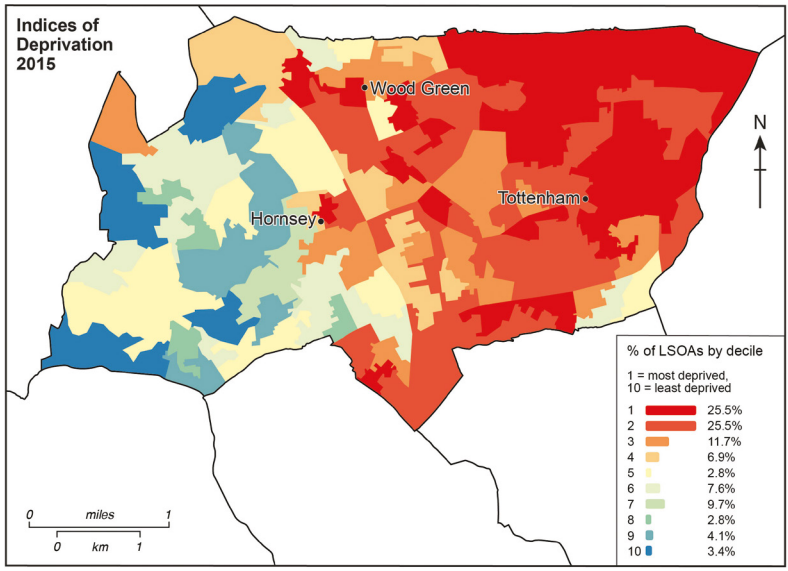


Figure 1.6 Haringey's east/west deprivation divide, 2015. Source data: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, English indices of deprivation 2015.

housing authorities (Levidow 1987). In subsequent decades, these successes have not been fully sustained in the face of racist policing, stigmatising media coverage and neoliberal urban governance (Beach 2022; Ndu 2022). Nevertheless, they continue to shape the sense of place.

Methodological note

This book evolved out of a research project initiated at the invitation of three people who played prominent roles in the StopHDV campaign. In 2019, a year on from the council's decision to scrap the HDV, we met Gordon Peters, Phil Rose and Hilary Adams to discuss the idea of documenting what the StopHDV campaign had achieved and how.

Given the misrepresentations of the campaign in much of the media, we felt it was important to capture an authentic account of who took part in the campaign, why they came together and how they organised. We also agreed that, as a relatively rare successful case of community resistance against comprehensive redevelopment and demolition in London, the StopHDV campaign would resonate with, and might inspire, ongoing and future struggles. Our intention from the

start was to provide a sympathetic account and critique of the campaign, celebrating its achievements while reflecting on what can be learnt from its limitations.

In the summer of 2020, we undertook in-depth interviews with 18 people who had taken part in the StopHDV campaign, including council tenants, traders, members of various community organisations and trade unions, councillors and lawyers. Some of those we interviewed were seasoned campaigners with long histories of social justice activism in Haringey and London more broadly. Others were new to this kind of politics but had felt compelled to get involved. In these interviews we talked about the HDV, how it came into being and why they were critical of it. We had conversations recollecting their experiences of the StopHDV campaign and the role they and others played, including memorable moments. And we asked them to reflect on the aftermath and afterlives of the campaign. Unless otherwise attributed, the quotes that we present in this book are from these interviews. Some of those we interviewed asked us to use their names; others requested anonymity.

To further investigate how and why the HDV was devised and presented, we drew extensively on official local authority documents, policy reports, recordings of council meetings and local/national media. From these artefacts we were able to learn and interpret much about the HDV's formative policy context, its key actors and their roles and relationships, its political and Business Case and governance structure, and its modes of community consultation. These documents also provided important insights into the material interests that underpinned the creation of the HDV and the political rationales given to defend it to the public.

After two years of initial research, we wrote a draft account and sent it to those we had interviewed for comment and critique. We were fortunate to receive a close examination of our account from many of them, correcting some of our misunderstandings and helping to sharpen our interpretation and analysis. In 2022, we also held a focus group with six interviewees who volunteered to discuss follow-up questions. In this, we discussed ways in which the StopHDV campaign has – and has not – led to a shift in the local politics of urban development, housing and regeneration. We also reflected on the strategic insights and tactical inspiration that others might take from the campaign.

Through this process we have produced a situated account of the HDV that is grounded in the experiences and reflections of those involved in its disruption. One risk of the approach is that we fail to fully represent the perspectives of those who supported the HDV. We believe that we

have given a fair account of the views and actions of politicians and officers who led on developing the HDV, drawing on their own reports and words. Given that official discourses in favour of redevelopment already enjoy powerful platforms, and guided by evidence of the dispossessive outcomes in other cases, we develop a critical account of the speculative city. If support did indeed exist for the HDV among Haringey residents, it was not expressed in a large-scale collective form.

Structure of the book

Disrupting the Speculative City is organised into two parts. The first presents our analysis of 'the speculative city' by detailing how and why the HDV was developed. Chapter 2 identifies the origins and significance of the HDV. Piecing together the process by which it was devised, we show how a racialised interpretation of the 2011 uprising provided the catalyst and justification for a neo-colonial 'assault' on Tottenham's council estates and everyday migrant economies (Ndu 2022).

In Chapter 3, we document how the HDV was conceived through, and shaped by, close relationships between the council leadership and private property developers in a system of local government that marginalises internal debate and delimits meaningful democratic engagement. In this chapter we return to the theme of the local 'real estate state' (Stein 2019) to explain the vested interests in governing through the inflation of land values and extraction of rents.

The second part of the book documents how a grassroots coalition successfully disrupted the speculative city. In Chapter 4, we explore how opposition to the HDV was organised, focusing on the coalition behind the StopHDV campaign. Correcting the record on the role of the left-wing group Momentum, we trace the rich heritage and social infrastructures of organising that led to the creation of the StopHDV campaign. We recognise the important contribution of wider movements – particularly against council estate demolition around London – but show that local initiative was key.

In Chapter 5, we identify the range of tactics deployed by campaigners working in and against the local state which, in combination, disrupted the speculative city. While favourable political conditions helped their cause, the size of the coalition and the ingenuity of its members allowed the campaign to take opportunities that arose and make their own. In light of its defensive orientation, we reflect on the broader impacts of StopHDV and its limitations.

To conclude, we review the major arguments of the book and examine the fate of the speculative city after the defeat of the HDV. Although the foundations of this extractive approach remain broadly intact in the UK, the contradictions of this model and the power of grassroots organising have led to a number of meaningful, though modest, concessions at different scales. StopHDV also began to articulate a more ambitious positive agenda around place, environmental justice and citizen participation. We end by drawing together those ideas and practices with international inspiration for a diverse, post-extractive, democratic city.

Notes

1 Throughout this book we refer to the 'local state' and to 'local state actors'. When we do so, we are referring to elected politicians and bureaucratic officers in local and regional government. We use local state instead of local government to highlight the structural (and structuring) relationship between central and local government as part of the state system under capitalism, and to emphasise the enduring features and dynamics generated by this relationship.

Part I
The speculative city

2
Conception: reactionary urban policy after the 2011 uprising

Introduction

> The 2011 riot precipitates all of this. The riot gave a lot of powerful people a lever to manipulate, take over (or colonise) the housing market in Tottenham. (Councillor)
>
> The 2011 riots are what gave the green light to property developers to think, 'Oh well, this area has got to be redeveloped. There is no hope for it. It cannot be reformed. It has to be knocked down.' (Alison Davy, resident of Northumberland Park)

In the 2010s, the London Borough of Haringey embarked on a project to redevelop an unprecedented amount of public land, including council homes and workspaces, through a joint venture with global property developer Lendlease. Called the Haringey Development Vehicle (HDV), the venture was emblematic of the 'speculative city' in which local state actors collaborate with real estate and finance capital to extract value from urban land by dispossessing and displacing diverse working-class communities.

The speed with which the HDV came into being, and the scale at which it was set to spatially transform the deprived east of the borough, requires explanation. In the late 2000s it was not obvious that Tottenham would be London's next 'real estate frontier' (Gillespie 2020). Despite being the recipient of 'various community-centred regeneration programmes' (Dillon & Fanning 2011, 571) in the 1990s and 2000s, and home to Tottenham Hotspur Football Club's billion-pound stadium development, Tottenham was a deprived area mostly overlooked by finance capital, major real estate investors and global corporate

developers. As one councillor recalled: 'Tottenham was always a poor relation in regeneration terms – all of the action and major money went to the Lower Lea Valley, Stratford and the Olympics [in Hackney, Newham and Tower Hamlets].'

Why, then, did Tottenham become the epicentre of a £2 billion property-led spatial transformation agenda, attracting some of the biggest corporations in global real estate at MIPIM, the international real estate fair in Cannes, France? To answer this question, we explore the origins of the HDV, focusing on how, under what conditions and through what mechanisms of power it was imagined and developed. We start with what many – including the campaigners quoted above – believe to be the HDV's catalysing event: the 2011 Tottenham uprising.

The 2011 uprising erupted on a late summer's evening in response to the Metropolitan police killing of Mark Duggan and the 'local police commander's refusal to meet with family representatives and to share even the most basic information about Mark Duggan's end with them' (Gilroy 2013, 553). Duggan was a young Black resident of Broadwater Farm, a public housing estate completed in 1973 that had once been home to Cynthia Jarrett. In 1985, Jarrett died of a heart attack during a Metropolitan police search of her home – an event that also sparked an uprising now synonymous with the estate and a source of its stigma (War Inna Babylon 2021).

As this deadly connection suggests, the immediate violence of Duggan's fatal shooting, and the ensuing eruption of 'urban rage' (Dikeç 2017), took place in the context of a long history of social violence embedded in British post-imperial and neoliberal urban statecraft and governance (Danewid 2020). Over the past seven decades, since the arrival of New Commonwealth migrants in the UK, this social violence has materialised in shifting forms of institutionalised inequality, injustice and oppression. Throughout this time, Tottenham's migrant and Black working-class neighbourhoods and communities have faced discriminatory over-policing, territorial stigmatisation, disinvestment and organised negligence (Elliott-Cooper 2018; Renwick & Shilliam 2022; Perera 2019).

Building our analysis from this context, we begin this chapter by showing how the HDV emerged through the punitive political atmosphere and policy-making environment produced in the uprising's aftermath. Obscuring its political causes and content, state actors at the national, metropolitan and municipal levels were among those quick to dismiss this 'riot' as the mindless acting out of an 'underclass' (Centre for Social Justice 2012), denying the rioters' grievances, denigrating the places in

which they lived and demonising their social bonds (Renwick & Shilliam 2022). This pathological framing of the uprising rearticulated tropes of the 'undeserving poor' (Tyler 2013) and naturalised 'punitive state responses [to the unrest] including lengthy prison sentences, violent police raids, increased surveillance, and social benefit sanctions' (Lamble 2013, 578). It also animated key policy documents that formed the official state response to the uprising: *It took another riot* and *A plan for Tottenham* (IPT 2012; Haringey Council & Tottenham Taskforce 2012).

Written by elite actors from the public and private sectors, these policy documents sought to take advantage of the uprising to remake Tottenham and prevent future unrest. By stigmatising diverse working-class communities, homes and spaces as 'anti-social' infrastructures, the reports' authors sought to justify and further a racialised agenda of corporate and municipal accumulation by dispossession (Horton & Penny 2023). They recommended fundamentally transforming Tottenham socially and spatially into a 'world-class' city quarter designed to attract wealthy investors and a new class of professional and creative urban citizen. Through the provision of 'luxury' residential real estate, high-end retail and restaurants, and a public domain with a 'highly visible police presence', the authors aimed to 'ensure that businesses and new residents have the confidence to invest and become stakeholders in Tottenham's future' (Haringey Council & Tottenham Taskforce 2012, 42).

Through this chapter, we argue that the HDV was a means of 'urban revanchism'. By this we mean that it was a vehicle for a political and economic project of (re)claiming diverse working-class areas of the city 'in response to subaltern mobilisation' (Kipfer 2022, 206). To make space for more profitable uses, so-called 'undesirables' and their commons would be removed through state and market forces. This agenda represented a neo-colonial echo of Baron Haussmann's speculative transformation of Paris in the mid-nineteenth century that sought to boost real estate values and foreclose revolutionary fervour. By demolishing council housing, displacing everyday economies and disrupting working-class livelihoods, the HDV threatened a racialised 'neo-Haussmannization' of Tottenham (Merrifield 2014).

An underclass uprising?

Like Brixton in south London, Toxteth in Liverpool and St Ann's in Nottingham, Tottenham is a 'symbolic location' for Black working-class communities and their struggles against institutional injustice in

post-imperial Britain (Elliott-Cooper 2018; War Inna Babylon 2021). Tottenham is known for decades of anti-Black social and state violence; it is, in the words of local community organiser Stafford Scott, a 'front line . . . of this militaristic, racist police force' (cited in Elliott-Cooper 2021, 122). It is also home to well-established grassroots anti-racist organising, activism and resistance, including two spontaneous rebellions and community defence campaigns against discriminatory policing.

In this context, Renwick and Shilliam suggest that the 2011 uprising should be understood as a 'response by youth to their virtual incarceration and devaluation by decades of housing policies that resulted in an organized neglect of their neighbourhood' (Renwick & Shilliam 2022, 137). Urban scholar Tia Ndu, then living in north Tottenham, recalls being woken by the unrest and hearing shouts of 'The government don't care about us' (Ndu 2022, 3). Emphasising a climate of disinvestment and discriminatory over-policing, one resident of Broadwater Farm estate explained the unrest by pointing to experiences of exclusionary development and gentrification: 'it's about having a stake in society, the chance to be someone. You have all these developments springing up, incomers with money and we're left looking on, wondering if we feature in the future blueprint' (cited in Dikeç 2017, 62). From these perspectives, the spontaneous takeover of the streets, looting of shops and burning of buildings was an improvised repudiation of police repression, government neglect and an urban political economy of austerity and financialisation that was deepening entrenched inequalities and uneven development (Enright 2015).

Yet while Tottenham was still burning, the British political establishment and mainstream media wasted no time in defining the disorder as pathological, rather than political (Dikeç 2017; Tyler 2013). Dialling into well-worn notions of the undeserving poor, in stigmatising and racialised language, politicians and the commentariat took to the airwaves and broadsheet columns to dismiss those involved in the uprising as 'mindless' and 'menacing' criminals, a 'dysfunctional base' and a 'feral underclass [that] needs to be diminished' (Tyler 2013, 3; Renwick & Shilliam 2022, 137). Stoking a moral panic around 'gang crime', British historian David Starkey warned that a 'nihilistic gangster culture' was turning Britain's white working class 'Black' (cited in Elliott-Cooper 2021, 114–15). Similarly, *Mirror* columnist Tony Parsons (2011) confidently opined that 'Without the gang culture of black London, none of the riots would have happened', despite admitting afterwards that his profiling of participants was 'a wild guess'.

In a climate of intense attacks on state welfare under the newly formed coalition government, calls were made for 'rioters' to lose all access to state welfare entitlements, including their family's council homes (Lamble 2013). David Cameron promised a war on 'gangs and gang culture' (cited in Elliott-Cooper 2021, 115). In Tottenham, during the post-riot clean up, some volunteers wore T-shirts proclaiming that 'looters are scum' (Lamble 2013). The campaigners we interviewed reported hearing elected borough councillors and officers in Haringey describe Tottenham as a 'basket case' and dismissing opponents of subsequent state-led redevelopment proposals as wanting to 'keep Tottenham shit'.

This framing of the uprising as the product of an urban underclass served to justify the repressive state response that soon followed. In addition to the escalation of 'random' searches, surveillance, home raids, arrests, incarcerations and benefit sanctions (Lamble 2013; Elliott-Cooper 2021), 'Members of the judiciary [were] instructed to deliver the harshest possible punishments for riot-related offences, and they openly declared their commitment to passing "deterrent" sentences' (Elliott-Cooper 2018, 2452). Of the thousands arrested in London, a disproportionate number were Black. In 2012, the Metropolitan Police responded to the uprising by introducing its 'Gangs Matrix', described by human rights group Amnesty International (2018) as 'a racially biased database criminalising a generation of young black men . . . [who are] often labelled as suspected gang members based on weak indicators – sometimes simply because they've been victims of gang violence themselves'.

In the months following August 2011, as local Black communities were organising the Tottenham Defence Campaign to protect young people from this latest round of state repression (Elliott-Cooper 2018), municipal and metropolitan actors set to work developing their policy response to the uprising. The official response came in three policy reports written by a series of 'independent' panels. The first report, entitled *Taking Tottenham forward*, was released in February 2012 and set out the recommendations of the Tottenham Community Panel (TCP). This panel was chaired by then Leader of Haringey Council, Claire Kober, who was deputised by the council's cabinet member for regeneration, Alan Strickland. The rest of the board consisted of local community and public leaders, plus one member from the business community – the chairman of Lee Valley Estates, who had 'substantial commercial and property interests' in the area (TCP 2012, 2).

Reflecting the panel's make-up, this report was the most grounded of the three in the experiences and testimonies of local people, including youth, voluntary and community organisations, and local traders. It

includes evidence collected in October 2011 by the Young Foundation. Rejecting stigmatising stereotypes of Tottenham propagated from the outside, these testimonies contextualised the uprising in a nuanced assessment of budget cuts to local services, youth unemployment and confrontational and discriminatory police behaviour, especially through the 'unjustifiable' use of Stop and Search. (From 2008–11, London's Metropolitan Police made more than 250,000 stops, using powers that do not require officers to suspect those stopped of involvement in crime. During this period, across England, only between 2 and 3 per cent of such stops led to an arrest [Dodd 2012].) The community contributors also articulated a clear position with regard to regeneration. Those interviewed and surveyed called for investment in small local businesses and were cautious of the promise of '"big businesses" that may overlook local interests' (TCP 2012, 18). The potential of Tottenham was located in the creativity and activism of those who already lived in the area, who had been building community for decades.

The recommendations of this report built on some of this evidence and could have paved the way for a community-centred response, learning from some of the good practice on the Broadwater Farm estate following the 1985 uprising (Hatherley 2020). However, in hindsight, the report also contained the early signs of a property-led redevelopment strategy in the making. It is noteworthy, for example, that the first two recommendations were to attract new investment, consumers and businesses to the area, and to improve the image of the area through better branding. After *Taking Tottenham forward* was published, the influence of local community leaders waned as the prominence of real estate interests waxed.

Never let a good 'riot' go to waste

> After the riots, Tottenham was perceived as this terrible basket case of riots, poverty and deprivation. But, as a result of this focus, developers and policy-makers suddenly realise, suddenly 'discover', that the area has amazing assets. Tottenham Hale has been there since 1967, it has always gone to Stanstead [airport] and Cambridge, or [the major rail terminus] Liverpool Street in 12 minutes. Living here people know that. But it suddenly became a revelation to developers that here was this untapped resource . . . So [Sir Stuart] Lipton is brought in as Boris [Johnson]'s big mate. He is

> a property developer, and he comes to Tottenham, and he sees the Victoria Line, the River Lea, Ferry Lane estate, the marshes, [he sees that] you can get panoramic views all across London. (Councillor)

From 2012 onwards – encouraged by London Mayor Boris Johnson and Haringey Council's executive leadership – developers, landowners, investors and consultants became an increasingly active and influential, if not always transparent and visible, presence in the borough's urban development politics. This privatisation of Haringey's urban policy-making process is clear in the two reports that followed *Taking Tottenham forward*. Published in quick succession, they laid the groundwork for the HDV.

Released in the winter of 2012, *It took another riot* (IPT 2012), the Mayor of London's report into the Tottenham uprising, was produced by a taskforce chaired by Sir Stuart Lipton, a prominent British property developer. The composition of this taskforce telegraphed the uses to which the uprising would be mobilised. Alongside Lipton, the other panel members included 'transformative' branding specialists from Wolff Olins; a deputy director of the Design Council; members of the Confederation of British Industry's London Council and Business in the Community; a market research, strategy and private equity consultant; two academics; and the head of strategic development at the Diocese of London.

Most of these panel members also sat on the Tottenham Taskforce (alongside three Haringey Council cabinet members and local MP David Lammy), which was convened by Haringey Council to write *A plan for Tottenham*, also published in late 2012. Conspicuously absent from both taskforces were any local youth, community, tenant, trade union or trader representatives. Tellingly, in the five pull-out quotations prominently displayed across *A plan for Tottenham*, four are from property developers, landowners and asset managers (including Sir Stuart Lipton, Grainger plc, Lee Valley Estates and Tottenham Hotspur Football Club). The other is from the Chair of the Design Council.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, neither of these reports was grounded in sociological accounts explaining why the uprising took place. No mention was made of the underlying structural and institutional injustices that gave rise to the uprising, which, as one in-depth investigation found, included institutional police racism; racially uneven poverty and inequality; budget cuts to welfare and public services, especially youth centres; and gentrification and displacement (LSE & *The Guardian* 2012).

Instead, both reports presented bold blueprints for comprehensive redevelopment and state-induced gentrification – or, as campaigners described it, social cleansing. The top recommendations in *It took*

another riot closely anticipated what would become the cornerstones of the HDV. The first was to create an independent governance structure – an urban development corporation – that would supersede the authority of the local council to oversee regeneration in the area, promising greater coordination and resourcing across different scales of government and the private sector, but without clear democratic accountability. The second recommendation involved transforming the built environment by redeveloping council estates and reducing the number of existing shops to 'concentrate footfall and encourage high-grade retail offerings that will attract visitors'. The third priority was to develop new housing with a mix of tenures, including by 'replac[ing] existing social housing where it is unsuitable for habitation or features layouts that contribute to cultures of poverty and low aspiration' (IPT 2012, 12).

These priorities suggest that London's governing elite were less interested in addressing the root causes of young people's rage in Tottenham than they were in uprooting those young people and their families from the area altogether. Indeed, campaigners understood the first of Lipton's recommendations to be a thinly veiled threat by the London Mayor to 'come in and run the council if something was not done' to prevent future disturbances:

> [I believe that] Kober made a deal [with the Greater London Authority] which meant the council retained control by promising that the issue of rioting would be addressed . . . The people who caused the riots were seen as too expensive to maintain . . . So the council felt the whole area needed to be regenerated – or as the campaign would say, social cleansing – by changing the kind of people who live in Tottenham. They wanted to bring in middle class people and revenue. They wanted to change the whole nature of Haringey. (Phil Rose, StopHDV campaigner)

Whether such a deal was made or not, the report put pressure on the council leadership to demonstrate their commitment to transforming Tottenham in pursuit of a new social order. The uprising served as the catalysing event of the HDV and its proposed dissolution of a diverse working-class space into a 'global city' for creative classes and highly paid professionals.

Social cleansing, not social housing

Following the uprising, local state politicians and policy-makers discursively denigrated Tottenham's working-class communities, spaces and places. This was especially true of public and lower-rent forms of housing which were framed as 'anti-social' infrastructure producing welfare dependency, ill health, criminality and any number of other markers of 'failed' urban citizenship (Horton & Penny 2023). Far from being part of a solution to entrenched inequalities, the architects of the HDV argued that such housing needed to be spatially deconcentrated by replacing council estates with 'more high-quality housing and home ownership' (Haringey Council & Tottenham Taskforce 2012, 8).

In explaining the unrest, *It took another riot* drew on architecturally deterministic analysis, tying the design of council housing to anti-social behaviour and criminality. This confirmed the prejudices against estates described above. The authors claimed that council estates have 'layouts that contribute to cultures of poverty and low aspiration' (IPT 2012, 12), a 'localism, often isolated from the wider community, [that] provides the context for challenging behaviour' and 'designs [that create] the ideal conditions for crime' (IPT 2012, 47).

Developing new housing with a mix of tenures was a key recommendation. In the context of London's housing crisis, this aim may seem benign. But, as critical scholars have noted across various contexts, the promotion of so-called 'social mixing' is cover for the exclusionary redevelopment of working-class neighbourhoods (Kipfer & Petrunia 2009). As the campaigners we spoke with argued, the intention was not to improve the housing conditions of the area's existing diverse low-income residents in council housing and the precarious private rented sector. Nor was it to increase the stock of council or social housing. The stated aim was to demolish existing council housing and build private flats for home ownership that would have been unaffordable for most local people:

> The council's desire was to bring people in who would pay their council tax and who would not 'be a burden' on local services. They envisaged renewing Tottenham in that sense as well as just through new buildings. (Alison Davy)

> It was social engineering, to make Tottenham a trendy place to be, but how that would have benefitted the local people I have no idea. (Stephanie Grant)

Comprehensive council estate regeneration – or, demolition and redevelopment – has become a commonplace and contested process across London over the past three decades (Watt 2021). While rationales for redevelopment vary and have shifted over time, a set of 'place myths' repeatedly underpins arguments in favour of bulldozing people's homes and communities. These myths include the idea that council estates are derelict spaces of concentrated poverty and social exclusion, characterised by crumbling mono-tenure properties; are 'rough' and dangerous spaces, encouraging anti-social behaviour; and are devalued spaces, marked by a lack of care, community and capacity.

Both policy reports shaping the HDV drew on and reproduced these myths to discursively (mis)characterise Haringey's council estates and tenancies as failed, unbalanced and contributing to 'cultures of poverty and low aspiration' (IPT 2012, 13):

> Failed housing estates should be redeveloped. Mono-tenure developments could be mixed, and future tenures could be better blended, bringing social change and an inclusive diversity. (IPT 2012, 26)
>
> Bringing forward this change means establishing Northumberland Park as a desirable place to live and work. New residential development will focus on promoting home ownership to create a better balance of housing in the area. (Haringey Council & Tottenham Taskforce 2012, 16)

Underscoring the intention to socially re-engineer the area, the authors of *It took another riot* stated that where 'Areas of Tottenham have over 50 per cent of their occupants in social housing . . . the tenure mix needs altering, so new social housing should only be provided to replace existing units' (IPT 2012, 84). Despite the rhetoric of social mixing, intersecting inequalities made social cleansing and racialised displacement the likely outcome (Addie & Fraser 2019). Haringey Council's own Equality Impact Assessment acknowledged that Black households would be less likely to benefit from 'affordable home ownership' than white households (Haringey Council 2015a).

In the aftermath of urban unrest animated in part by concerns about gentrification and displacement, local state and private sector actors denigrated council and low-rent housing as anti-social infrastructure. Franklin Thomas, of Northumberland Park, commented:

> It's the disbanding of communities. I've known people round here for 50 years. They were facing being moved out to Luton or Ipswich. You can't just throw people into the middle of anywhere. What's going to happen to the young, old, people of ethnic minorities? But the council wanted to disband communities, because if the community got together then they [the council] would be in trouble.

The other housing 'problem' identified by the reports' authors was that of high population churn, which they claimed, without providing evidence, 'disrupts schooling, leads to lower regard for the urban environment, [and] . . . also complicates healthcare'. Notably, this problematisation of population churn was racialised and linked directly to migrant 'others arriving from all over the world' (IPT 2012, 45). The root cause of this 'problem' was not located by the authors in a lack of tenant rights and the insecurity of England's private rented sector, which is one of the most precarious in Europe. Rather, it was said to be caused by 'low rents [that] attract transient populations', framed as prone to anti-social and criminal behaviours that 'depress rents, thereby perpetuating the cycle' (IPT 2012, 34). Since the cause of the problem was identified as low rents, the expansion of council housing with secure tenancies was not considered as a potential solution. Instead, solving the racialised problem of population churn would 'be achieved by wider prosperity in the area' (IPT 2012, 39) with home ownership for a wealthier and whiter population to come.

This mythmaking flew in the face of evidence concerning the lived experiences and diverse social relations of the borough's council tenants and their neighbours. Tottenham was already a socially mixed area. For example, in 2014, Northumberland Park ward was made up of 49 per cent social tenants, 26 per cent private rental tenants and 24 per cent owner-occupiers (Haringey Council 2017b). Furthermore, in a survey of tenants on the same estate, respondents communicated that 'There is a strong community spirit and this should be preserved' (Haringey Council 2017b, 11). The recommendation that home ownership be prioritised, with no increase in social homes on any estate redevelopment, ran counter to evidence that London's housing need is overwhelmingly for social housing, not for private homes (Mayor of London 2017).

The discursive attack on council housing sought to justify a revanchist project to remake Tottenham for investors and the middle classes at the expense of its existing diverse working-class population. It was one part of the HDV's neo-Haussmannian project of 'social engineering – the goal being a new moral order of respectable and well

behaved (middle class) residents' (Lees 2014, 926). The second part of this project focused on the commercial livelihoods of the borough's working-class and migrant traders.

Disrupting livelihoods through commercial gentrification

> For the most vulnerable to the impacts of change, including the elderly, the young, the poor, and the newcomer, local worlds are spaces where much is at stake, since these are the places in which the less mobile are often highly invested – socially, culturally, and economically. (Hall 2011, 2573)

The policy documents that underpinned the HDV promoted the development of new housing for market sale and private rent, which would increase the local state's income from residential council tax whilst displacing those most likely to need council services. Additionally, the HDV would have entailed the transformation of local high streets and shopping centres, such as Tottenham High Road and Seven Sisters market (a hub for London's Latin American community). These were earmarked in investor-oriented promotional material as 'Areas of Change' where large chains would replace existing independents and 'no-nonsense' policing would make the public realm more attractive to middle-class shoppers and tourists. This would, it was hoped, increase local business tax revenues. As with housing, the local state planned for its idealised urban citizenry through the denigration and destruction, and valorisation and provision, of different forms of infrastructure for different kinds of people.

In her writings on London, Suzanne Hall (2011; 2015) paints a rich picture of the economic and cultural value of ordinary high streets for diverse working-class communities, especially in low-income neighbourhoods. These 'apparently messy or banal linear strips activated by migrants' are produced through creative, 'agile and fast-footed urbanism[s]' that enable 'sharing and experimentation [across] gender, racial and ethnic groupings' (Hall 2015, 855–9). For example, chicken shops offer young people not only affordable food but also 'cultural forums . . . to congregate without harassment from the council . . . and cause a youthful ruckus over the trivialities of everyday life' (Perera 2019, 27). With youth clubs closed and bans on gathering in many public spaces, these are places to 'find shelter from the arbiters of state

violence: the police' (Perera 2019, 27, also referencing Minamore 2017). Outlets and traders at Seven Sisters market help newly arrived migrants to navigate the challenges of settling in the city, offering an 'important space of social and economic inclusion' and creating a sense of belonging for Latin Americans in London (Hasenberger & Nogueira 2022, 1). In the face of a dominant frame of values that marginalises and misrecognises the importance of local high streets, they form a kind of 'everyday urban infrastructure common to London life' (Hall 2015, 859) that is essential to the lives and livelihoods of low-income and racialised communities.

By design the HDV would have remade Tottenham's high streets, displacing local traders and shopkeepers. A key recommendation in *It took another riot* was to transform the economic base of the area, by repositioning Tottenham within London's spatial division of affluent consumption. Simon Hester, the secretary of Haringey Trades Union Council, noted that this meant displacing the area's diverse working-class shops with trendier and supposedly more modern middle-class alternatives: 'they were looking to do a Dalston – to shift poor people out over time and regenerate the area with new people who had more money to spend, that would attract more businesses, so more business rates and council tax'. (Dalston lies a few miles south of Tottenham in the London Borough of Hackney, a former working-class area that has undergone a process of intense 'super-gentrification' over the past 30 years.) *It took another riot* aimed to remake the area into a destination for middle-class work and play – a 'shopping "draw"' with 'more shops that function as "soft" business infrastructure' (IPT 2012, 83, 90).

To achieve this, the report stated that 'the number of shops needs to be drastically reduced and new ones provided to give the community a mix of individual local shops and new brands' (IPT 2012, 83). The 'community' referenced here is presumably not the area's existing diverse low-income community, who already make good use of the ordinary and often migrant-run stores 'to access forms of exchange and interaction other than retail' (Hall 2011, 2573). Instead, a new imagined community, more legible within elite frames of value, is invoked: a community of 'creative city' office workers and visitors who require 'amenities such as a variety of lunch offerings, high street banks, health clubs and chemists' and 'coffee shops where people meet' (IPT 2012, 40, 90).

The intention to turn Tottenham into what one councillor called a 'cauldron' of commercial gentrification and displacement was also reproduced throughout *A plan for Tottenham*. In case there was any doubt about the intention to physically displace existing commercial tenants, it envisaged that 'lower quality outlets will be replaced by high quality

businesses that make a positive contribution to the local area' (Haringey Council & Tottenham Taskforce 2012, 34). In the not-so-subtle images of the council's desired future, Seven Sisters in Tottenham was reimagined as a sleek and glassy non-place where corporate-owned high street brands replaced the area's culturally and economically distinctive shops (Figures 2.1 and 2.2).

Strikingly, given that it was produced in response to urban unrest catalysed by police violence and institutional racism, *A plan for Tottenham* also emphasised the importance of a stronger and more interventionist police presence to make Tottenham attractive to its new imagined community. The council endorsed 'a strong enforcement approach that tackles quality of life issues and delivers visual improvements [to make] the High Road . . . a more pleasant and appealing place for residents and visitors' (Haringey Council & Tottenham Taskforce 2012, 37). A 'highly visible police presence' was promised, 'taking a no nonsense approach to issues that impact on people's quality of life. This will ensure that businesses and *new* residents have the confidence to invest and become stakeholders in Tottenham's future' (Haringey Council & Tottenham Taskforce 2012, 42, emphasis added).

Aside from retail, other local workspaces were targeted for redevelopment – part of a broader workspace crisis linked to planning changes propelling the conversion of workspaces into residential spaces (Taylor 2020). Here too there was a sense of being devalued by the council. A business owner on the Peacock Industrial Estate, which lies just west of the Spurs stadium, was reportedly told by a leading councillor that his mechanic's shop 'did not fit in, would not fit in to the new vision'. The

Figure 2.1 Shops in Seven Sisters, Tottenham, 2023. Photo: authors.

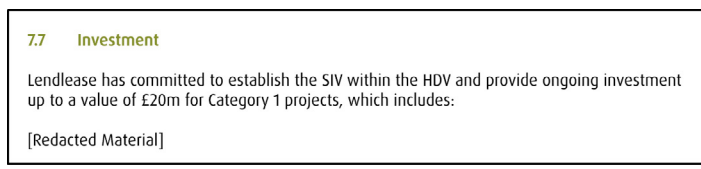
Figure 2.2 New shops in Seven Sisters as envisaged by *A plan for Tottenham* (Haringey Council & Tottenham Taskforce 2012, 24).

estate's 30 businesses and 230 employees would eventually face being moved to a new site, losing ownership rights to their units and becoming leaseholders. They complained that they were 'never consulted on this issue' (Tepeyurt 2018).

What the council's economic plans lacked in detail they made up for in boosterism. The HDV would bring 'circa 22,000 new jobs', 'particularly within the technology and creative sectors, through better management of the commercial portfolio and the creation of new workspaces' (Haringey Council & Lendlease 2017, 2, 5). It is hard to evaluate the potential of the developer's contribution to this agenda. Lendlease would invest 'up to' £20 million in a list of projects that was redacted from the public documents (Figure 2.3). The 4,000 jobs forecast for Northumberland Park would, optimistically, come from a skills training centre and the aforementioned 'significant increase in shops, cafes and restaurants', plus a co-working

facility and studios for 'creative businesses'. It was hoped that a 'new office cluster or university campus' would eventually appear (Haringey Council & Lendlease 2017, 15), although the strategy noted that 'Haringey and Tottenham in particular, is not currently a proven office or university location' (Haringey Council 2017b, 32). The 'employment space strategy' for Northumberland Park included mystifying declarations such as 'new shops, cafés, and restaurants will enable continuity of existing local businesses and jobs' (Haringey Council 2017b, 30). Much weight was attached to the area possibly benefitting from the proposed Crossrail 2 trainline, which was mentioned nine times in the strategy. But the line was not anticipated to open until some time in the 2030s: its predecessor, Crossrail 1, suffered huge delays. In 2020, work on the plans for Crossrail 2 was suspended altogether.

Across *It took another riot* and *A plan for Tottenham*, the local state aimed to attract a 'creative class' of urban dwellers through the provision of social, leisure and work infrastructure catering to their needs and tastes. Substituting diverse working-class workspaces with those geared to new residents and tourists would require the 'marginalisation of [existing] modes of life and the building of different social relations that are recognised and legitimated in revitalising neighbourhoods' (Addie & Fraser 2019, 1377). Had the HDV been successfully implemented, social infrastructure in the form of a newly designed public realm with parklets, open space, cafes, restaurants and soft business infrastructure would have been funded by, and provided to valorise, speculative real estate investment. For those with the means, this may have been welcomed and celebrated as an improvement to the area. For others – including those well served by the area's existing low-income retail offer, whose livelihoods depend on the area's affordable commercial and light industrial space, or who would have found themselves targeted by a strong police enforcement approach – the changes would likely have been experienced as alienating and anti-social; as an infrastructure of phenomenological displacement and of 'power, dominance and (attempted) social control' (Graham & Marvin 2001, 1).


7.7 Investment

Lendlease has committed to establish the SIV within the HDV and provide ongoing investment up to a value of £20m for Category 1 projects, which includes:

[Redacted Material]

Figure 2.3 Redactions from the *Haringey Development Vehicle business plan: Socio-economic strategy* (Haringey Council & Lendlease 2017, 23).

Conclusion

In this chapter we have shown that the HDV was a product of the policy response to the 2011 uprising in Tottenham. By tracing the origins of the HDV back to this event and the punitive political atmosphere of its immediate aftermath, we have uncovered the racialised and class politics underpinning this expression of the speculative city. Ignoring entrenched inequalities, decades of racialised over-policing and the slow violence of under-investment in diverse working-class communities, actors across the British political establishment and mainstream media worked to disavow the political content of the uprising and demonise those who took part as a pathologically dysfunctional underclass. Drawing instead on a revived moral panic surrounding the so-called 'undeserving poor', politicians and media commentators drove a reactionary agenda that called for 'rioters' to be stripped of their welfare entitlements and handed the toughest possible sentences for their crimes. In this political context, the executive leadership of Haringey Council came under pressure from a Conservative-led government and the London Mayor to avert further unrest.

Private interests and state actors saw, and were keen to act on, an opportunity to turn crisis into capital by socially and spatially transforming Tottenham, replacing its diverse working-class communities with a new, wealthier, whiter urban citizenry. Guided by two official taskforces that were predominantly made up of private sector representatives, this 'disaster capitalism' agenda (Klein 2007) would be achieved through a fusion of state and market force. The aim was to deliver – at speed and scale – a real estate-led racial and spatial agenda of accumulation by dispossession.

This is a strong accusation. But we believe that the language and intent of the key policy documents that underpinned the HDV's formation provide compelling evidence for this interpretation. Not only did these documents obscure the structural and institutional forms of oppression that gave rise to the 2011 uprising, they also actively denigrated and stigmatised the area's diverse working-class communities, spaces and places. That denigration served as a pretext for replacing them and their social infrastructures with housing and amenities intended for a wealthier population – as the council's own impact assessment acknowledged. The underlying colonial logic of redevelopment was that the racialised 'underclass' had forfeited its right to urban citizenship through unrest, welfare dependency and an inability to afford projected increases in market-rate property, and that the territory should therefore be remade

for investors and new residents, who were viewed as legally and culturally legitimate fiscal contributors and successful 'market subjects' (Tallon 2013; Bledsoe & Wright 2019).

Whilst never explicitly couched in such terms, the discourses, logics and interests behind the HDV represented a clear case of what Neil Smith (1996) called 'urban revanchism'. That is to say, the HDV emerged out of, reflected and was animated by a neo-colonial project to 'take back the city' from its poor, undesirable and restless inhabitants. It recalled the way Baron Haussmann had mobilised state capacity to remake swathes of nineteenth-century Paris, pump-priming real estate speculation and defusing revolutionary upheaval. The HDV promised to 'deconcentrate' Tottenham's diverse working class by demolishing large council housing estates, doing away with so-called 'anti-social infrastructures' and disrupting everyday economies and livelihoods. After effectively tearing apart Tottenham's urban fabric and building it anew for investors and professional workers, a more visible police presence was promised, to make the new residents and visitors feel safe. As north Tottenham resident Franklin Thomas reflected, 'they're the architects of control'.

3
Creation: the urban politics of the speculative city

Introduction

In Chapter 2 we traced the formation of plans to redevelop Tottenham through the punitive political and policy response to the 2011 uprising. The plans expressed a reactionary racial and spatial agenda of accumulation by dispossession and urban citizenship-making. In this chapter we examine the political structure, culture and interests of the local state and show how these shaped its joint venture, the HDV, with a private developer. We situate its genesis within the political culture of the governing centre-left in London and shifting relations between central and local government in England. More broadly, we place the HDV in the context of a global 'real estate turn' in urban politics, which is transforming local states across various contexts. In doing so, we reflect on what the HDV tells us about the significance of the speculative city for urban democracy, local economies and social justice after the 2008 global financial crisis.

We begin by evidencing the top-down, privatised process by which key decisions concerning the HDV were made. The HDV was imposed on Tottenham's residents by the borough's political leadership, allegedly under pressure from the Mayor of London. Operating through a democratically deficient local government structure, Haringey Council's leaders and their consultants devised a public-private partnership for the comprehensive redevelopment of public land in Tottenham and other areas. The project achieved cabinet approval without meaningful consultation – let alone deliberative participation – with the borough's youth groups, tenants' organisations, trade unions or trader associations. Instead, reflecting a long-standing paternalistic political culture of municipal Labourism in London local government, the HDV would be done *to*, ostensibly *for*, but certainly not *with* the people of Tottenham.

Private real estate and financial interests, however, shaped the HDV from the outset. The influence of these interests is most apparent in the decision to partner with the global developer Lendlease. At the time, the council leadership argued that this partnership would enable them to harness private sector investment, expertise and capacity for the public good. However, Lendlease had a controversial record on workers' rights and was infamous for the destruction of social housing. This choice of partner confirmed to campaigners that the HDV was an opportunistic project of 'disaster capitalism' (Klein 2007), in which the 2011 uprising formed a pretext to privatise and commodify public assets.

Before the Lendlease deal was agreed, private development professionals and lobbyists were central in making the case for, providing expert advice to and designing the structure of the HDV. Based on the evidence, they included: construction, legal and developer consultants, who wrote early policy reports and options appraisals; prominent local landowners and businesses, who were regularly consulted in closed private meetings with senior politicians and officials; developer and industry lobbyists, who 'wined and dined' local politicians whilst introducing them to their corporate clients; and major global investors and developers, who were courted by the council at international real estate fairs.

As well as being shaped by the political structure and culture of the borough's local state institutions, the HDV was also a product of the opportunities, challenges and interests of local statecraft at a time of shifting central-local relations, austerity urbanism and the trend of capital to accumulate increasingly through urban channels. The inflation in London's land and property values has presented both challenges and opportunities for the local state. Challenges because it deepens urban inequalities, poverty and displacement pressures, and thus social need. Opportunities because it is a huge potential financial resource to be extracted. As local state leaders in neighbouring Camden Council memorably put it, it is London's own 'North Sea Oil' (Hatherley 2020).

The HDV represented a mode of speculative urban statecraft reflecting a global 'real estate turn' (Shatkin 2017) in urban politics. Faced with a mounting fiscal crisis caused by budget cuts downloaded by central government, and lacking powers to create new taxes to meet growing social need, local state actors in London have been monetising state-owned land and property assets. Resisting pressure to sell such assets outright, the HDV was part of a wider trend towards the development of longer-term speculative joint or council-owned real estate ventures. These have been championed in elite policy-making circles since 2010 as a

progressive form of municipal entrepreneurialism (or growth-generating local government) capable of securing local state autonomy, capacity and revenue for public purposes. Indeed, the HDV was promoted as a pragmatic means of achieving the council's social democratic objective of 'inclusive growth'.

The HDV was, however, a fundamentally speculative strategy. Referencing the potential value of council assets that would be transferred to the HDV, campaigners warned that it was a £2 billion gamble on the future of London's land and property market. For Tottenham's diverse working-class communities, the speculative city's dice were loaded: if the gamble paid off, landowners, developers and the local state would accumulate capital at the expense of their dispossession, with profound consequences for social housing, local livelihoods and their 'right to the city'. If the gamble turned sour, they would be left with a deeper fiscal crisis and the likelihood of managed decline whilst the HDV's architects would move on and, most likely, up.

Imposing the HDV on Tottenham

The HDV was conceived of between 2013 and 2015 as the vehicle to finance, govern and realise the policy response to the Tottenham uprising. The intention of the HDV was to fundamentally remake Tottenham as a place. Official representatives of the area did little, however, to create space for public discussion and debate about the nature and the stakes of the changes being proposed. The HDV was not formulated with the borough's community groups, tenants' organisations or trade unions. Nor did the HDV emerge deliberatively from within the local Labour Party's institutional structures – it was not even included in Haringey Labour's 2014 local election manifesto.

Instead, the HDV was developed top-down by the political and bureaucratic leadership. The institutional processes of participation that cabinet members of the council pointed to as evidence that they had consulted residents were at best tokenistic and at worst manipulative (Arnstein 1969). Far from creating space for meaningful engagement and a debate about options and alternatives, they seemed designed to foreclose the possibility of genuine participatory democratic practice and to legitimise decisions that had already been made.

This manner of devising and implementing urban policy is not unusual in Haringey (Dillon & Fanning 2011) or in London more broadly (Penny 2017; Penny 2020). On the contrary, it reflects the dominant political

culture of the institutional centre-left in London's local government since the early twentieth century (Gyford 1985; Hatherley 2020). Municipal Labourism, as this political culture is known, refers to a paternalistic, technocratic and reformist politics in which council leaders and officers generate and deliver policy *for the people*. Herbert Morrison, leader of the London County Council in the 1930s, personified this approach. Morrison was enthusiastic about the role of professional officers and thoroughly sceptical of the democratisation of policy-making, or even local councillors initiating new ideas (Gyford 1985, 5). Over time, the professional officer has become more corporate in outlook and increasingly proximate to the private sector. As part of the wider neoliberalisation of the British state, an increased amount of local state officer time has been spent commissioning private providers, managing private contracts and working alongside private partners in joint ventures.

Municipal Labourism delivered in important ways for certain segments of London's working class. Some of the city's best council housing, created during the height of the post-war welfare state, stands as testament to what it was able to achieve given the means (Hatherley 2020). However, it also promoted closed-off, remote, inward-looking, secretive ways of working that demanded party discipline and that could be both chauvinistic and racist. Gyford (1985) notes, for example, that in the 1950s and 1960s municipal Labourism imposed a great deal of comprehensive redevelopment on working-class communities at the expense of their existing ways of life and livelihoods. Whilst municipal Labourism did much for parts of the urban working class, it also did many things to them, and very rarely worked effectively with them. In this regard, the HDV is part of a longer tradition, with a privatised twist.

There is evidence of moves towards the HDV in meetings and internal reports going back to 2013. Most of the campaigners we spoke with only learnt about the HDV in 2016, despite many of them being engaged with local government activity as councillors, tenants' groups and community organisers, trade union members and political party activists. By that time, the HDV was an already well-developed proposal:

> I discovered the HDV in late 2016. When I looked at it, I thought, this is horrendous! This is the sell-off of most of the public assets of the borough. There was no doubt that's what the [official] documents intended when you read them. But we later discovered that the whole concept of the HDV was first mooted in 2013 between the then chief executive Nick Walkley, a small group of councillors led by Councillor Kober, and a management consultancy. (Gordon Peters)

The delay in bringing the plans forward for democratic deliberation was symptomatic of a concentration of power within local government in the council leader and cabinet (see Box 3.1). The early stages of the HDV's development excluded most of the local Labour structure (that is, the ward councillors, key officers and members of the two local branches – the Tottenham and Hornsey & Wood Green Constituency Labour Parties). One Haringey councillor, who would become a central figure in the campaign to stop the HDV, recalled:

> Within the Labour Group, and amongst the councillors, the HDV had barely been discussed, despite it being a big policy which should have been debated. There was very little open discussion or debate in the group and there was poor understanding of the HDV amongst most councillors.

It was the grassroots tenants' organising group Defend Council Housing that brought the HDV to their attention (see Chapter 4). Another councillor, who was part of the local party committee responsible for organising forums to debate and respond to policy papers, recalled no consultation on the HDV having taken place before the cabinet approved the HDV Business Case in October 2015.

Box 3.1: Democratic deficits in the leader and cabinet model of local government

One councillor we spoke with reflected that 'any story of the HDV has to have regard for the political structure. The structure in Haringey is what is called the strong leader model. It is deeply undemocratic . . . it is very top-down, and the backbenchers are either minor irritants or don't matter.' It is 'not altogether unusual', campaigners and councillors reflected, for 'a small group of senior politicians and officers to decide what they want to do in secret and then work out how to legitimise it after'. Indeed, this way of working is a routine part of the political culture in the borough which has been dominated by Labour since its creation in 1965. It is also an in-built tendency of the 'strong leader and cabinet model' of local authority governance.

Introduced by New Labour with the Local Government Act 2000, as part of its 'modernisation' agenda, the strong leader model replaced a more horizontal and consensus-based committee structure of decision-making, in which all elected councillors were involved in the policy development process. The reforms concentrate executive power in the

hands of the council leader and their chosen cabinet. In this model, non-executive councillors are meant to 'support and challenge' the executive through overview and scrutiny panels, akin to select committees in parliament.

This, however, does not work well. Campaigners we spoke to, including some councillors, reflected that backbench councillors are often ill-informed about major policy issues and decisions. Instead of being engaged through policy workshops and seminars, where alternative options are laid out and discussed, councillors are sent extremely lengthy and complex briefing papers. Evidence suggests that the model has created a sharp division between executive and non-executive councillors, marginalising the latter and enabling the former to make decisions with little accountability (Latham 2017). In a survey of almost 2,600 councillors, the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE 2014) found that just 37 per cent of non-executive councillors thought the strong leader decision-making model was working well and only 30 per cent felt it had improved the transparency of decision-making.

Furthermore, the model facilitates the formation of tight circles of political patronage. One councillor explained that there are strong financial incentives for councillors to back the executive in order to access the power and pay of cabinet posts. The Local Government Act 2000 'massively increased the power of the executive via the "payroll vote"' (Latham 2017, 13). It is not uncommon for executive councillors to be paid over three times the amount that backbench councillors receive. As such, members have a material interest in backing the leader: 'If you were in Claire Kober's cabinet, even if you strongly disagreed with the HDV, you'd have had to sacrifice a lot of money because she would have sacked you [for opposing]' (Councillor).

Public permission for demolition?

In 2017, facing growing criticism over the lack of public consultation on such a significant project, Alan Strickland, cabinet member for regeneration and housing, stated in a letter to *The Guardian* that 'Haringey's regeneration plans have been developed after years of conversations and consultation with residents' (Strickland 2017a). As evidence of this, Strickland pointed to the work the council had commissioned when developing its Strategic Regeneration Framework, published in 2014.

In October 2013, Haringey Council had commissioned a company called Soundings to carry out a consultation on Tottenham's future. Soundings had previously worked for Lendlease on the demolition of the Heygate Estate.[1] The Haringey consultation lasted five months and engaged 3,700 people through a variety of means, including 'completing canvass cards; visiting a dedicated website; visiting drop-in events and attending various exhibitions, community meetings and interviews' (Haringey Council 2014b). On the face of it, this troubles claims that the HDV was not developed with residents. However, a closer look into the process reveals that, like too many local government consultations on such issues, it was 'not open, transparent or genuinely dialogic' (Watt 2021, 243). At best it was tokenistic and at worst it was manipulative (Arnstein 1969).

While many residents were invited to engage in the consultation process through a variety of methods, the questions they were asked were vague and often leading. People were asked, for example, 'What would make Tottenham a great place?' or whether 'building a mix of affordable and private housing to meet existing and future residents' needs' and 'improving the quality and maintenance of existing housing' were priorities (Soundings 2014). At the community exhibitions, attendees were met with information boards that lacked detailed information about how the council was planning to meet its ambiguous aspirations (see Figure 3.1). Nowhere in the consultation documentation were people directly asked what they thought about the council entering into a joint venture with a private partner to comprehensively redevelop swathes of the borough. Northumberland Park resident Franklin Thomas recalled: 'The council employed staff to come round to the estates and say to people, including people who didn't speak much English, "Wouldn't you like to have a new home?" Of course they said yes to this camouflage of home improvements. And then the council always cited these surveys as evidence of community support.' In his letter, Strickland reported that 'People told us, among other things, that they wanted homes, jobs, better transport and a better high street' (Strickland 2017a).

Residents of Northumberland Park estate were consulted in much the same way as part of the Northumberland Park Strategic Framework Consultation carried out in 2014 by George Cochrane Associates Ltd (George Cochrane Associates 2015). Commenting on the process, Paul Watt notes: 'Most of the questions . . . involved residents being asked to respond to a series of vague statements about things being made "better", "new", "improved", "attractive", "high quality" in a

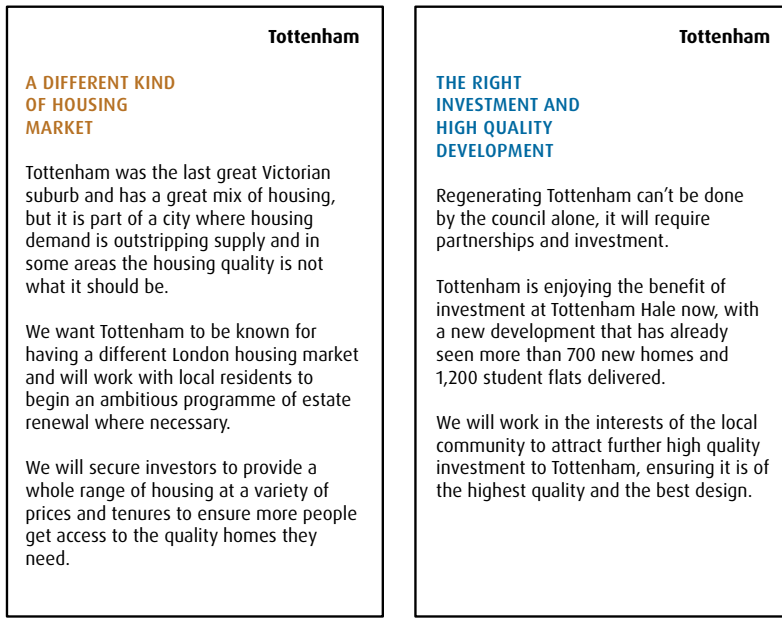


Figure 3.1 (a) and (b) Exhibition boards on two of the seven strategies presented in the Strategic Regeneration Framework, 2014 (Haringey Council 2014a).

manner which it would have been counterintuitive and even perverse to *disagree* with' (Watt 2021, 241; see Table 3.1). Nowhere in any of the 32 statements provided by the consultants were residents asked to comment on the HDV, or the demolition of their homes or the redevelopment of their estate as a denser, mixed-tenure neighbourhood. Despite this consultation, when surveyed two years later, most tenants and residents on Northumberland Park estate stated that they knew very little about the council's plans. In a survey of 494 tenants and residents conducted on the estate in 2016 by consultants working with the council, 27 per cent of respondents said they knew 'a little' about the regeneration proposals, 35 per cent said they knew 'not much' and 34 per cent said they knew 'nothing' (PPCR Associates 2016). Yet it was this quality of consultation that cabinet members and senior officers would subsequently point to as proof that people had consented to the HDV.

Table 3.1: Northumberland Park consultation

Extracts from a list of 32 statements that residents were asked to respond to as part of the *Northumberland Park strategic framework consultation report* (George Cochrane Associates 2015).			
Statement	Agree or strongly agree %	Unsure/don't know/no response %	Disagree or strongly disagree %
1.2 Northumberland Park should be made up of attractive places with a range of different buildings and open spaces	86	7	7
1.3 There should be more local shops, cafes and restaurants and more business opportunities for local people	84	10	6
1.6 The improvement of Northumberland Park should make better use of space and create safe routes, connections and spaces by designing out crime	88	8	4
2.1 Regeneration should deliver high quality new housing for local people and maximize opportunities for the local community	87	9	4
2.4 All homes should have modern kitchens and bathrooms and be designed to current housing standards	89	7	4
2.7 All homes in Northumberland Park should have access to gardens or private open space	76	21	3
3.1 In future, Northumberland Park should have better public open spaces with a range of facilities for everyone to use	83	13	4
3.2 In future, there should be new green open spaces that are safe, well lit and overlooked	81	14	5
4.4 Residents should be engaged throughout the regeneration process	88	10	2

Speaking at a StopHDV protest in September 2017, Phil Jackson summarised the council's consultation as follows:

> Haringey Council, if you listen to them, will say 'we engaged with the community, we sat down with the community, we asked the community what they wanted'. And naturally people said, 'we want better homes, we want gardens, we want safe lighting, we want places for our kids to play, we don't want to be in a situation where maintenance is not carried out . . .' That is what people said in the surveys, but let me tell you a little bit more. How were the surveys done? They were done in part through council fun-days. We'll give your kids balloons, we'll paint your kids' faces so you can have a great time, meanwhile fill out this form. Would you like better housing? Yes, I would. Would you like a garden? Yes. What improvements would you like? I would like somewhere safe for my kids to play. I want it to be safe to walk home. How was that interpreted [by the council]? It was interpreted as demolition. Not one of the forms that were handed out said 'do you want demolition?' That was never asked.

Consultations run on behalf of Haringey Council did not mention any governance and financing model for regeneration. Nor did they enable tenants, residents, traders or workers to collectively develop and decide upon principles, protocols and policies to guide regeneration locally. They did not create meaningful community 'permission for demolition' (Figure 3.2). Instead, they were run as tokenistic listening exercises for predetermined ends. The results were vague enough to act as evidence in support of almost any agenda that senior politicians, officers and private actors might choose to pursue.

Privatised policy-making on yachts in Cannes

That local civil society and most of the Labour group were conspicuously absent, or strategically excluded, from its development should not be taken to mean that the council's executive leadership devised the HDV all on their own. As Freedom of Information (FOI) requests submitted by campaigners revealed, behind closed doors, in spaces that were scarcely visible – let alone accessible to local communities – private real estate interests influenced, advised and lobbied councillors and officers from the outset. Indeed, the relationships that cabinet members

and senior officers had with the real estate community (including large landowners, developers, property consultants and lobbyists) appear closer than those cultivated with the communities they were responsible for representing. Through meetings on yachts in the south

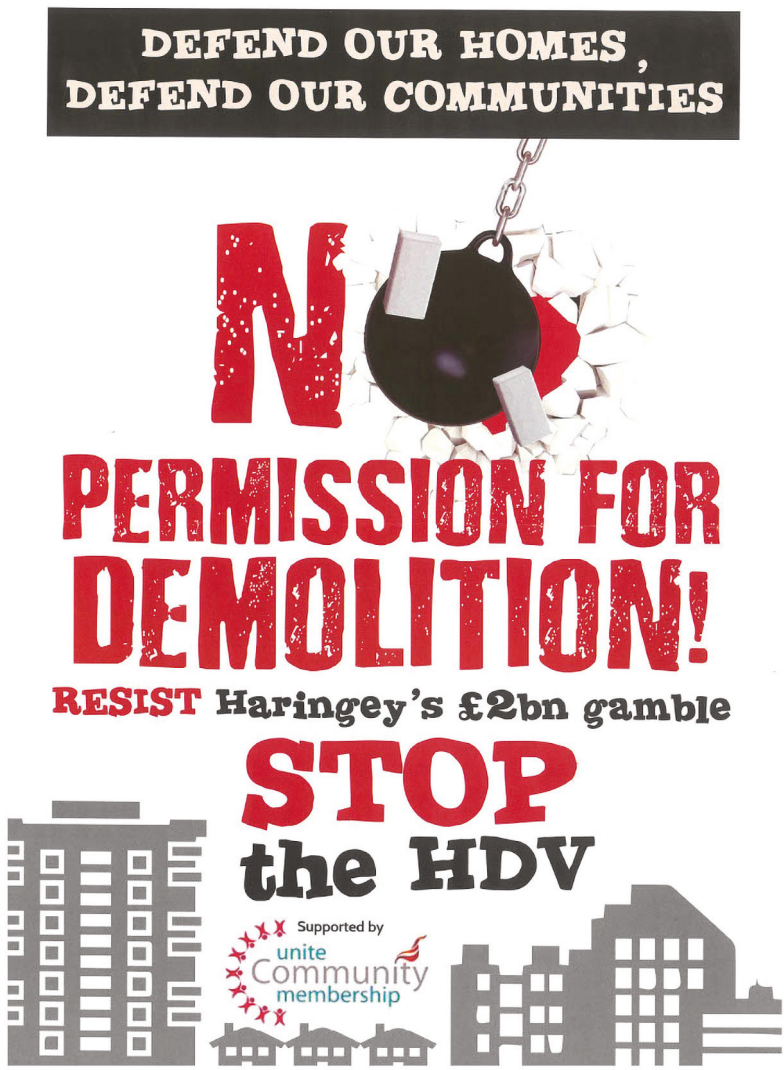


Figure 3.2 'No permission for demolition!' banner, 2017. This became a recurring slogan of StopHDV campaigners during protests and demonstrations. Poster reproduced with the permission of Gordon Peters.

of France, at dinners in London restaurants and in aptly titled 'shadow boards', private actors were given privileged access to shape the form and content of the HDV.

In 2012, Kober appointed a new chief executive officer to the council to steer the post-uprising transformation agenda. Nick Walkley, who went on to work for global real estate firm Avison Young, was best known for his work as CEO of the London Borough of Barnet. There he led on the 'One Barnet' project, a controversial outsourcing programme that transferred almost all the local authority's responsibilities to the international business services corporation Capita. This now-reversed programme involved privatising services as far as was legally permitted and cutting 90 per cent of council staff (Hill 2022). The employment of Walkley was celebrated in *It took another riot*:

> In the year since we were asked to champion Tottenham by Mayor of London Boris Johnson, the position of the London Borough of Haringey has changed, and its Leader, Councillor Claire Kober, has appointed a new Chief Executive with the clear intention of bringing regeneration to Tottenham. She has shown considerable political skill and judgement. (IPT 2012, 15)

Critics of the HDV were less enthusiastic. For one councillor, Walkley embodied the corporate ideological capture and 'cultural appropriation of local government and what it's supposed to be about'. His appointment signalled that the council was set on building Tottenham's post-uprising future with and for private interests looking to profit from the area's assets.

Property consultants have long engaged with the local state. Since 2010, however, they have 'evolved from valuing current land and buildings to formulating revenue generating strategies based on existing asset utilization and commercial property acquisition' (Pike 2023, 142). The HDV was a case in point of this evolution. Private real estate actors had strongly influenced official policy reports after the 2011 uprising. The HDV Business Case was also prepared by Turnberry Real Estate, Bilfinger GVA and Pinsent Masons, 'drawing upon the findings and work already undertaken to date by the Council *and its consultants*' (Haringey Council & Turnberry Real Estate 2015, 9, emphasis added).

Unlike most tenants and residents in the borough, developers and large landowners were able to speak directly to and influence relevant cabinet members and senior officers through an opaque group set up in 2012 called the 'Tottenham Landowners and Major Businesses Group'.

Despite the high-level strategic and policy discussions that were taking place, ordinary residents struggled to gain access to the minutes of these meetings and had to resort to submitting FOI requests. A backbench Labour councillor described this group as a kind of 'counter-organisation to the council which was headed by developers but facilitated by the council'. The group met every two months with senior councillors and officers, including the chief planning officer, the chief executive and the head of housing and regeneration:

> I didn't think it was right that only developers would have the sort of access to those leading officers and politicians that most other residents would not ever get anywhere near – how many people can get access to the chief planning officer and the executive and the head of housing and regeneration? They were getting privileged access, including in places like Cannes at MIPIM, and getting carve-ups of the borough. (Councillor)

Haringey cabinet members and senior officers started attending MIPIM, the global real estate convention, in 2014 and attended every year until 2017. The cost of these trips, which ran into tens of thousands of pounds, was partially covered by landowners and developers, including those who regularly attended the Tottenham Landowners and Major Businesses Group, such as Grainger, Lee Valley Estates and Tottenham Hotspur. Promoting itself as 'the premier real estate event [that] . . . gathers the most influential players from all sectors of the international property industry' (Lynn 2023), MIPIM has an infamous reputation for glitzy excess, with attendees rubbing shoulders at champagne-fuelled networking events, expensive dinners and on private yachts, as they make deals to trade and redevelop local communities.

As urban scholar Antoine Guironnet (2019) notes, MIPIM is where local councils sell their visions of redevelopment to global investors and developers. It is also, importantly, an event at which local councillors and officers are encouraged by the event's organisers and consultants to anticipate and meet the expectations of investors and developers. Since 2010, London has become a central city at MIPIM, taking up significant venue space and attracting a large amount of interest. The shortlist of potential developer partners for the HDV was announced at MIPIM 2016. In investor brochures made especially for the 2017 event, the east of Haringey, including Tottenham and Northumberland Park estate, is described as 'London's biggest growth opportunity' and is carved up into areas of 'growth' and 'change' (Figure 3.3).

Back in London, cabinet members and senior officers were regularly wined and dined by Terrapin Communications, a PR firm and lobbyist for developers. Labour cabinet members received £770 worth of hospitality over 13 lunches and dinners paid for by Terrapin Communications between July and October 2014, according to local newspaper *The Ham & High*. The firm had close links with Lendlease, which in 2017 was announced as the preferred partner for the HDV. Terrapin's director was a former employee of Lendlease. Terrapin also set up meetings between Haringey councillors and the leader of Southwark Council, Peter John, who had recently worked with Lendlease to demolish the Heygate Estate in Elephant and Castle, where over a thousand council homes had been replaced with just over 100 social homes. Councillor John went on to become the chairman of Terrapin Group (35% Campaign 2021). Terrapin Communications employed as a consultant Haringey Labour's chief whip (a role with responsibility for ensuring that Labour councillors attend council assembly meetings and vote in accordance with the local party leadership's position) (Smulian 2017; Local Government Chronicle 2017). That overlap was 'a glaring conflict of interest', to quote former councillor Clive Carter. (Terrapin and the councillor rejected that claim.) These connections exemplify the 'revolving door' between councillors and

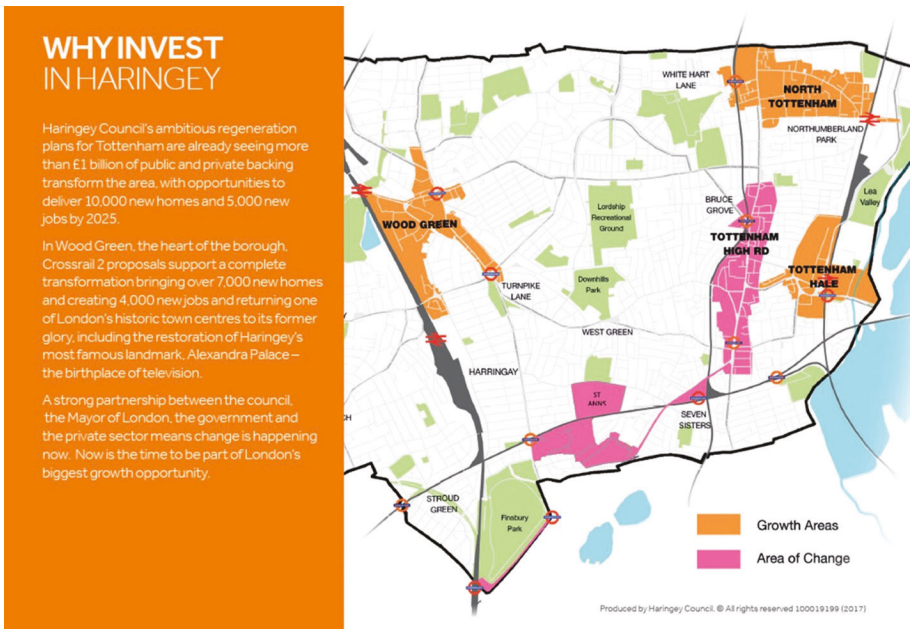


Figure 3.3 Promotional material produced by Haringey for international real estate fair MIPIM, 2017 (Haringey Council 2017d, 6–7).

the property industry in London through which elected representatives and officials move between the town hall and lucrative jobs in real estate consultancy and lobbying, helping developers win contracts, gain planning approval and limit their planning obligations.

Adding to concerns that real estate interests were driving the HDV's agenda was the discovery, through FOI requests, of a 'shadow HDV board' (as it was known by the council). According to one councillor, this entity was set up to allow the council leadership and developer partner to begin spending money on the first steps of the HDV long before the deal had been scrutinised and agreed by the council. This 'added to the whole idea that the agenda was to railroad this through and that the Party would have no say'. By the time backbenchers – let alone residents – knew about it, 'it would be all done and dusted'.

Austerity urbanism and the real estate turn in urban politics

So far in this chapter we have contextualised the development of the HDV in a top-down, paternalistic and increasingly privatised local political culture and system. We now broaden our focus to situate the HDV within national and global political-economic forces. The HDV was developed in the context of a national programme of austerity and a global turn to real estate as a key strategy of capital accumulation and urban statecraft. The resulting challenges, opportunities and interests of local governance have had a profound effect on urban politics, narrowing the scope and possibilities of democratic decision-making and collective provisioning of housing and welfare in cities and neighbourhoods.

In England, the local state does not 'spring from some ancient right of grassroots self-government'; rather it is 'subject to central government' (Cockburn 1977, 46). Whilst this does not mean that the local state is simply the administrative arm of the central state, it does point to the fact that its capacities and relative autonomy can be understood as the outcome of central-local relations. Local government in England lacks constitutional and legislative protection, existing as a 'creature of the national government and Parliament, operating in a highly centralized and evolving system of central-local relations' (Pike 2023, 49). The local state is heavily reliant upon – and profoundly shaped by – the funding it receives (or increasingly does not receive) from the centre and the delimited tax-raising powers at its disposal.

In the aftermath of the global financial crisis, the UK's Conservative-led coalition government (2010–15) embarked on a radical agenda of 'fiscal consolidation'. This turned a crisis of global financial institutions, precipitated by predatory speculation and permissive regulation, into a national fiscal crisis for the state (Clarke & Newman 2012). Set within a narrative of public sector profligacy, the 'age of austerity' came from a political decision to address a perceived public deficit crisis overwhelmingly through public expenditure reductions (Innes & Tetlow 2015), rather than stimulus or progressive taxation.

Austerity was especially intense at the local scale. Central government downloaded unprecedented budget cuts onto the welfare state and local government (Peck 2012). The extent and geography of austerity is clear from the figures. Between 2011 and 2015, as the HDV was being formulated, the Department for Communities and Local Government faced cuts of almost 40 per cent in real terms (Beatty & Fothergill 2014). The reduction in central government funding for councils was unprecedented – three times larger than that imposed in Thatcher's first term between 1978 and 1985 (Newman 2014). Worse was to come, with a further 56 per cent cut announced for 2015–20 following the election of a majority Conservative government (Lowndes & Gardner 2016). These austerity measures were targeted at already impoverished and unequal areas, including metropolitan councils where resources are incommensurate with need (Hastings et al. 2017). London's more deprived boroughs, among them Haringey, were hit especially hard. Local government in London saw a 63 per cent reduction in core funding in real terms between 2010 and 2020 (London Councils 2018).

Austerity has entailed a profound change in local government funding. It has largely dismantled the long-established system of spatially redistributive grants, drawn from general taxation and allocated geographically based on need. Instead, local authorities have been compelled to become financially 'self-sufficient' by maximising 'local property taxes and other revenue sources, especially commercial and investment activities' (Pike 2023, 73). With limited autonomy to increase property taxes, however, local authorities are incentivised to increase the size and value of the residential and commercial property tax base. Justified as promoting locally led growth, this strongly encourages local authorities in areas of high property values to turn to real estate. Specifically, it incentivises the emergence of exclusive and expensive housing developments – with disproportionate numbers of one- and two-bedroom flats and little social infrastructure for families – and commercial developments of chain stores, boutiques and upmarket restaurants.

Meanwhile, land and property values were rising in cities such as London, thanks in part to supportive state action and monetary policy. The foundations for this real estate boom had been laid over the past four decades through the expansion of the financial sector, underpinned by structural economic shifts, technological change, favourable regulation and the demunicipalisation of housing. Together, these made property a leading source of growth and profits in the UK (Hofman & Aalbers 2019).

The local state has long been an active supporter of land value inflation and state-led gentrification. But in the conjuncture of austerity amid a real estate boom in the 2010s, some UK councils assumed a leading role as executors of the speculative city. In London, inflation of land and property values is a challenge for the local state because it deepens urban inequalities, poverty and social need. Housing costs have far outstripped the wages of working-class, and now many middle-class, Londoners, causing an acute housing crisis that has been deepened by the dwindling supply of council and social housing (Edwards 2016). For those struggling at the bottom of the housing market, this crisis is experienced as a destabilising loss of ontological security and as a profound lack of control over dwelling conditions, or residential alienation (Madden & Marcuse 2016). For tenants in underfunded public and exploitative private rented sectors, it typically means living in overcrowded, unhealthy and potentially deadly homes, whilst always being at risk of eviction and displacement.

At the same time, as revenue and capital grants have dwindled, land monetisation through speculative real estate has become a central means by which local welfare, public services and social infrastructures are financed and delivered (Penny 2022; Robinson & Attuyer 2021). This 'real estate turn' in urban politics has occurred internationally, though unevenly (Shatkin 2017). As state capacities become increasingly dependent on successfully growing property revenues, real estate capital gains greater power to delineate political possibilities (Stein 2019).

Since the 1980s, centrally directed policies in England have emphasised the facilitation of development through the sale of local state land to investors and developers for one-off capital receipts (Christophers 2018). This sale and gifting of land to speculative private developers occurs within a permissive viability-led planning regime that seeks to capture some value for the public through 'planning gain' (Ferm & Raco 2020). From 2010, asset management strategies, including the identification and sale of so-called 'surplus land', have intensified (Pike 2023).

In recent years, some local state actors – especially those in local authority areas that are cash-poor but asset-rich – have sought to gain more control over the development of and extraction of value from their land over the long term, including by setting up joint venture and wholly owned companies in which they retain at least a 50 per cent stake. For the most part, taking advantage of relatively cheap public credit from the Public Works Loan Board, these council-owned companies invest in developing or acquiring property within their local authority areas, but some councils have aggressively invested in out-of-area commercial property (Beswick & Penny 2018; Penny 2022; Bloom 2023).

These speculative, debt-fuelled, asset-based strategies are dependent on location; they are most likely to be pursued in areas with 'dynamic property markets, strong demand, and supply constraints' (Pike 2023, 188). Even where they 'work', however, they are inherently unstable and contradictory. They are founded on a form of local statecraft whose means and ends are the inflation of property values (Raco & Souza 2018). Where they are successful in this endeavour, they increase social need and displacement pressures on low-income residents. All too often the local state has pursued 'fiscal rents' (Haila 2016) and increased property tax values on public land at the expense of existing and future council housing tenants who are at risk of being dispossessed of their homes, communities and social and green infrastructures (Penny 2022).

The speculative city is thereby deepening geographically uneven development between places, driving inequalities within places and creating a political situation in which urban elites present residents with a 'false choice urbanism' (Slater 2021): choose investment and gentrification, or choose disinvestment and managed decline.

Extracting land values for inclusive growth?

From 2016, as news of the HDV began to circulate within the borough, popular distrust of what campaigners would come to call the '£2 billion gamble' grew and pressure on the council leadership mounted. The role of private investors, developers and powerful local landowners in the project was particularly contentious. Responding to the rising tide of discontent, Claire Kober wrote a defence of the project on the council's website in January 2017.

In the piece, Kober acknowledged mounting popular distrust of 'the property development industry', especially among the local Labour Party membership, accepting that it 'can seem murky'. She also distanced

the HDV from the outright sale of public land – an approach that, she conceded, has too often seen all 'the profits going into shareholders' pockets or the land sitting vacant while a developer waits for the "right time" [to develop]'. The HDV was not, she promised, a fire-sale privatisation of public land, property and urban space, but rather a mechanism 'to achieve and retain a long-term stake and control in development of the Council's land, maintaining a long-term financial return' (Haringey Council & Turnberry Real Estate 2015, 3).

At the same time, Kober stressed the necessity of changing the political-economic logics that governed the provisioning of public and social infrastructure. Between 2010 and 2020, Haringey was at the sharp end of enforced budget cuts, with central government funding for the borough reduced by £124 million. As the local population grew and demand for services rose, the number of council employees was halved (Haringey Council 2020). Yet rather than challenge or resist these conditions, Kober's leadership sought to smoothly manage the new normal of local austerity by catalysing and capturing increased land values. In doing so, the council's leadership was in step with a governing common sense taking shape across London's Labour boroughs to 'compassionately' and 'competently' manage the slow violence of austerity, rather than collectively push back against Conservative economic dogma (Penny 2020).

To make good on its commitments – to build more homes and tackle homelessness; to provide more jobs that 'put money in the pockets of Haringey families'; and to 'breathe new life into our high streets, town centres and industrial estates' – Kober argued that the council needed to become financially self-sufficient. And it could not do so, she claimed, without the investment, capacity and expertise of the real estate development community:

> Austerity has hit local government disproportionately hard, and with government grants soon to be a fond memory councils will depend on growth in council tax and now also business rates for their future financial stability. Without growth in homes and jobs, council services like social care, libraries and street cleaning face inevitable decline. Growth is the only option for a council like Haringey that's determined to control its own destiny . . . we frustratingly can't deliver growth on our own. This gives us two options. We can sell the land, and leave a private developer to dictate the pace, scale and quality of development and reap all the profits . . . The other

> option is to bring together our land with private cash and expertise in a joint venture. This gives the council a 50% stake in deciding what happens, making sure the homes and jobs created are the ones people need. (Kober 2017)

Although Kober did not name it as such, the HDV represented a political choice to pursue a path-changing 'real estate turn' in municipal statecraft (Shatkin 2017). The council would actively use its 'leverage over land both as a powerful tool to shape urban development and as a means to control the revenue that development generates' (Shatkin 2017, 15). In the case of the HDV:

> This proposition would seek to use the Council's asset base to provide substantial leverage of private sector funding and would facilitate implementation of an innovative development delivery approach to proactively accelerate and deliver growth and regeneration in the Borough. The strategy would therefore seek to combine Council assets with private investment and expertise, whilst allowing the Council to retain control over pace and quality of development, providing the Council with long term revenue and investors with long term yields. (Haringey Council & Turnberry Real Estate 2015, 9)

Choosing to accept that the days of meeting local need through redistributive investment were over, the promise of the HDV was that the council could successfully take advantage of 'the amazing good fortune to be part of London, one of the great world cities' (Kober 2017) by harnessing the private sector to inflate and monetise land values. On each HDV development, part of the profits secured through private housing sales and rents would be used to cross-subsidise 'affordable' housing – within the limits of financial viability, as stipulated in planning policy (Ferm & Raco 2020). The agreement between Lendlease and the council required a 'commercially acceptable return' and established the HDV with a 'view to profit'. It was assumed that this profit motive could be reconciled unproblematically with the council's social aims. The new developments would also increase the local council tax and business rate base, which could finance local welfare services and social infrastructure. In 2017, cabinet members were advised that development returns to the council, not including enhanced rental returns from the gentrified commercial portfolio, would amount to £275 million, with a

further £37.7 million coming from development levies (Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy) and £13 million per year from council tax and business rate uplifts (Haringey Council 2017a).

The national programme of austerity implemented throughout the 2010s was an important backdrop to the HDV. It gave impetus to the plans and no doubt constrained the council's room for manoeuvre in other directions. However, the HDV was not an inevitable outcome of downloaded budget cuts. Austerity was enacted nationally, yet Haringey was unique in pursuing a joint venture on this scale and with such ambition. Some other councils, for example, have sought to use the power of the public sector to support and diversify their local economies through a 'community wealth building' approach that helps to incubate local cooperatives and social enterprises (O'Neill 2018). Furthermore, as campaigners warned, the HDV offered no guarantees that the council could effectively manage austerity. As we discuss below, it risked exacerbating the council's financial fragility. At the same time, it would also disrupt the socio-economic infrastructures that supported livelihoods and helped people to mitigate the effects of cuts to the welfare state and public sector.

Countering the council's narrative

Following the publication of the HDV Business Case in October 2015, it did not take long for local activists to sound the alarm and begin to organise. Their reasons for doing so reflected a lack of faith in the council's motives and competence, and a suspicion of the leadership's close connections to developers and landowners. They were driven by a deep anger over the decision to partner with Lendlease specifically, based on its track record in Southwark, as well as a wider critique of the speculative and risky nature of public-private partnerships.

Together, these concerns coalesced into a convincing critique of the speculative city articulated on the doorstep, during meetings and at protests, as well as in leaflets, on posters and online. Whilst this critique was more oppositional than it was propositional, it nonetheless expressed commitments to greater and more meaningful participation in policy- and decision-making, to public ownership and control of council land and assets, and to protecting and expanding council housing, affordable workspaces and the rights of tenants and traders.

Campaigners argued that the HDV was undemocratic in conception and by design. Its conception was strongly influenced by real estate interests, leading many to question claims by the leadership that the

HDV was genuinely set up to serve local people's needs. They were also unconvinced that the 50:50 power sharing agreement would be a 'marriage of equals' (Councillor Carter). Haringey housing lead Alan Strickland (2017b) claimed that the structure of the HDV would put the council in the driving seat, but 'gagged and trussed up in the locked boot would be a closer analogy', argued Councillor Carter. Campaigners were specifically angry at the choice of Lendlease as a partner and unconvinced that the council officers, whose numbers and capacity had been greatly reduced by austerity measures, would be up to the task of robustly negotiating on their behalf against the global developer worth billions of dollars, which had a track record of broken promises:

> [Lendlease] is a company that is multinational – if you look at its website it is very proud of the billions of pounds of investment it has in numerous countries – and by comparison with them this council is a minnow. (Councillor Hare, speaking at an Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting in March 2017 [Haringey Council 2017b])

Cabinet members and senior officers dismissed concerns that Lendlease has a history of blacklisting union organisers in the construction industry, and of breaking promises to meet local policies on social and affordable housing. They argued that the 50:50 partnership would ensure that cabinet members would be in a strong position to check Lendlease's worst impulses.

But in the detail of the HDV, campaigners foresaw a governance model that would disempower councillors. To the argument that the council would have a veto power in decision-making that they could use to force Lendlease's hand, campaigners reasoned that it was the council that would have the most to lose from stalled negotiations. The terms of the 50:50 partnership agreed by the council and Lendlease suggested that the council would be in a weaker position than cabinet members and senior officers were letting on. If the council and Lendlease could not agree on a substantive issue – for example, if Lendlease pushed to lower the amount of social or affordable housing being offered – a so-called deadlock event would occur, and project documents stated that the HDV would be wound up. This would be politically damaging to the cabinet and financially disadvantageous to the council (Barratt 2017). The council would have invested time, capacity and money, with nothing to show for it. What's more, it was possible that, depending on the stage of the development process at which a deadlock should happen,

the council would have had to buy back Lendlease's share of the land that had been transferred to the HDV – land that was formerly owned fully by the council – at a price that had been agreed by the council, but redacted from publicly available documents. Indeed, 'much of the financial and commercial information around the estates and properties to be transferred have been redacted from council documents on grounds of commercial sensitivity' (Williams 2017).

The slogan '£2 billion gamble' communicated the risky nature of the HDV. The HDV was, campaigners recognised, a fundamentally speculative venture: success, on its own terms, would have been dependent upon winning the property development game. Even in a city like London, which has been awash with investment in recent years, real estate requires the anticipation and management of complex risks over the long term. Notwithstanding prudent modelling, swings in the cost of finance, labour and materials, as well as fluctuations in sale and rental prices, can wreak havoc, leaving promised homes unbuilt or assets mired in debt. This seemed especially pertinent in the face of Brexit – not to mention the unforeseen implications of the Covid-19 pandemic, the economic consequences of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and spiking inflation from 2021.

Another risk, especially given Lendlease's history in London, was that the (already small) amount of promised affordable housing and workspace would quickly be sacrificed on the altar of 'financial viability' should business plans look shaky (Ferm & Raco 2020). The 'affordable' provision was dependent on market-rate properties fulfilling the developer's profitability requirements. The sector often argues that commitments made at initial planning stages must be revised down as projects progress. The possibility that promised proportions of affordable housing would not be delivered did not seem to have been flagged to councillors by the planning department, despite clear precedents like the Heygate Estate in Southwark and, closer to home, the Tottenham Hotspur stadium redevelopment, where £16.4 million initially promised in Community Infrastructure Levy contributions was reduced to just £447,000 (Panton & Walters 2019).

Furthermore, campaigners had good reason to question the council's commitment to deliver anything close to the amount of genuinely affordable housing that was necessary to meet local need. We have already seen that the HDV was conceived in a policy environment hostile to social housing. The formative report *It took another riot* had recommended that the council commit only to replacing demolished social housing. Additionally, the HDV Business Case did not mention

social housing. Nor did it specify what it meant by 'affordable', which under government legislation can mean anything up to 80 per cent of market rents – rents that the HDV was designed to increase. Questions also remained over the likelihood of rises in service charges that would accompany comprehensive redevelopment; changes in the terms of tenancies to which council tenants would almost certainly be subject; and spatial segregation within new mixed-tenure developments, including through the use of off-site affordable housing blocks or 'poor doors' (separate entrances for 'affordable' or market-rate sections). Whether tenants and leaseholders would have an actionable right to return to the rebuilt estates or have to rebuild their lives elsewhere (possibly outside London) was unclear. In 2016, the only promise made was that the council would 'endeavour to ensure tenants have the right to return but this may not always be possible and so this is a matter that will be discussed with affected tenants and residents as part of the communications plan on a scheme by scheme basis' (Our Tottenham 2016, 4). As public pressure mounted, cabinet members began to offer assurances publicly that existing council tenants would be offered a right to return and that tenancies would be matched as closely as possible with existing secure council tenancies. Ultimately, however, since these details would be subject to future project-specific negotiations and viability appraisals, councillors could offer no real guarantees beyond the fact that people's homes would be demolished and their communities undone.

None of this is to deny the need for investment in places like Northumberland Park – an estate that has been subjected to decades of managed decline. Yet, whilst no one denied the challenges of governing through a period of unprecedented budget cuts, imposed on the council from above, few were convinced by the economic or political logics of the HDV. Tenants and residents argued that they deserved more than promises from politicians who would make no guarantees and a developer with a notoriously bad reputation.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have explored how the proposed transformation of Haringey was developed through the political structure and culture of the local state. We situated the HDV within the top-down, paternalistic and increasingly privatised political culture of municipal Labourism in London.

The HDV was imposed on Tottenham in an opaque fashion by a small group of executive councillors and senior officers who, in the aftermath of an urban uprising signalling deep underlying political disenfranchisement, chose not to listen meaningfully to the voices of the borough's community and youth groups, tenants' organisations or trade unions. Given that the HDV would have fundamentally reshaped Tottenham as a place, it should be remarkable that elected representatives did so little to create space for public discussion and debate about the nature and stakes of the changes being proposed. Space was, however, provided for private real estate interests to influence and lobby councillors and officers, and ultimately shape the HDV. The relationships that cabinet members and senior officers had with the real estate community (including large landowners, developers, consultants and lobbyists) seem to have been far closer than those cultivated with the local communities to whom they are responsible.

Locating the HDV in shifting central-local government relations in England and the transformation of the local state as part of a global 'real estate turn' in urban politics, we saw how the HDV was designed to serve the financial and fiscal interests of the developer and the local state. The interests of Lendlease were clear and obvious: it sought to maximise profits for shareholders and found in Haringey a major opportunity to do so on public land. For Lendlease, Tottenham was just another 'real estate frontier' (Gillespie 2020). The interests of the council are more ambiguous and were hotly contested by campaigners. The council leadership argued that the HDV would enable them to harness private sector investment, expertise and capacity for the public good. They stressed that the HDV governance structure would provide cabinet members with the necessary control to steer development. They also argued that, given the context of austerity, the HDV was the only viable means by which they could achieve their objectives. Like the rising tide that lifts all boats, the executive leadership insisted that increasing land values would enable the council to improve local places, boost home ownership, cross-subsidise more affordable housing and provide jobs for local people.

Campaigners responded by crafting a strong counternarrative to the speculative city. They argued that the HDV was undemocratic in conception and by design. The partnership with a major global developer was not, and never could be, a 'marriage of equals'. They pointed out that even if the council was minded to fight for low-income tenants and residents, the venture was speculative and risky. Not only did it threaten bankruptcy for the council if it went wrong, it placed at risk working-class social infrastructures and livelihoods if it was successful on its own terms.

Note

1 In a letter to *The Guardian* responding to Alan Strickland, a Heygate resident gave an account of his experience: 'I attended many of the "consultation" events held by Soundings on behalf of Lendlease in regard to the redevelopment of the Heygate Estate in Southwark. I found their methods patronising and manipulative. Agendas and meetings were set by them and anyone without the time and energy could not keep up. Why it was a single project, financial viability, affordability, social housing were all ignored. The colour of bricks and preserving some trees were the only contributions allowed.'

Part II
Disrupting the speculative city

4
Opposition: building grassroots power

Introduction

Here we explore the makings and character of the grassroots coalition that led the campaign to stop the speculative redevelopment of Tottenham via the Haringey Development Vehicle (HDV). We identify who was involved, and how and why they came together. In doing so, we counter a common misrepresentation of the campaign as a hard-left faction of the Labour Party seeking to purge so-called moderates. Instead, we situate the formation of the StopHDV campaign within a context of anti-austerity and housing-based movements, across London and within the borough. Far from being a narrow doctrinaire coterie, the coalition against the HDV emerged from diverse groups, drawing on wide sources of inspiration and solidarity. These included other London campaigns, networks and unions struggling for socially and ecologically just urban futures in the face of intersecting crises. Also important was Haringey's particular geography and history of political action. StopHDV formed out of the borough's liberal, progressive and radical networks of support, advocacy and activism. Across their social and political diversity, campaigners and some councillors came together in an open coalition around a shared sense of place and a commitment to defend communities at risk of displacement. It was this breadth that gave the campaign the capacity to tackle the HDV from multiple angles simultaneously.

The StopHDV campaign came to a crescendo in early 2018, when council leader Claire Kober resigned. This was a shock to London's Labour establishment: Kober was an ambitious, high-profile Labour figure, well regarded by the party establishment across the capital. Her exit followed a concerted effort by local Labour Party members to push prospective councillors to either oppose the HDV or face a contest with an alternative candidate who would take a stand against it (see Chapter 5). Ignoring

the motivations of campaigners, most of the media created a narrative that Kober was the victim of a factional strategy orchestrated by 'the pro-Corbyn pressure group Momentum' to 'purge . . . moderates' among the Labour councillors and take over the council (Proctor 2017; Watson 2018). This powerful and enduring story sought to delegitimise the campaigners' resistance to state-led domicide and displacement (Ferreri 2020) by tarring those involved as, at best, misguided 'loony leftists' and, at worst, sinister militant 'Trots'.

The campaigners we spoke with explained that this was a misrepresentation of StopHDV and the role of Momentum within it. Certainly, some Labour councillors and many members – including new joiners enthused by Corbyn's leadership and channelled through Momentum – played important roles in the coalition. But the campaign was not initiated or coordinated by Momentum. Nor was it ever a tightly organised factional cabal preoccupied with the soul of the Labour Party. Reducing the campaign to a local case study of a national political battle erases the local grounds, dynamics and politics of the struggle. It also obscures the social infrastructures of activism and advocacy that were critical conditions of the campaign's success.

Disrupting the speculative city in Haringey was the work of a broad coalition – a dedicated but loose, perhaps unlikely, alliance – that cut across party political and ideological lines. The StopHDV campaign was led by local activists from a variety of left and liberal political backgrounds and traditions, working in concert across the borough with tenants, traders, community organisations, experienced conservation activists and some elected councillors. Together they convened regularly in open public meetings, which drew large (albeit shifting) crowds, and in smaller strategic groups open to all those interested in dedicating more time and energy to the cause.

Uniting these disparate geographies and groups – connecting with people through new and existing organisations, as well as wider outreach via direct leafletting and canvassing, social media activity and other media work – was vital to the campaign's success. It gave StopHDV the capacity, energy and expertise to pursue multiple disruptive tactics simultaneously. While the activities and tactics of the campaign cohered into an effective strategy, they were not directed or doctrinaire: they were flexible, led by expediency and different people's interests, skills and capacities. The campaign was based in a welcoming and pragmatic ethos, which set aside factionalism, offered social opportunities alongside the minutiae of campaigning, gave StopHDV local legitimacy and enabled it to take and make different opportunities (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: The coalition against the HDV

Contributors	Key groups	Key contributions
Established activists	Haringey Defend Council Housing	Critical analysis and expert knowledge of housing issues within a wider network
Critical councillors	An initially small group of Labour Party backbenchers and Liberal Democrat opposition councillors	Use of official procedures to expose information, question decisions and open opportunities for public pressure
New estate-based organisations	Northumberland Park Decides	Community support, information and mobilisation on one of the main council estates targeted for redevelopment
Locally led solidarity networks	'Our Tottenham' coalition of community groups promoting bottom-up regeneration and challenging *A plan for Tottenham* Community branch of the Unite union – for non-workplace affiliated members, in which several of the key campaigners were active, for example in anti-austerity organising	Shared political critiques, relationships of trust and some material resources
Community planning elites	A small number of activists experienced in engaging with planning processes in the wealthier side of the borough	Expertise in contesting local redevelopment through official council channels
Newly politically active community members	Large numbers of local people drawn into protests, community theatre and other activities	Demonstrations of large-scale public opposition to the council, including via the media
Political party activists	Labour Party members and the left-wing group Momentum	Efforts to ensure candidates in council elections opposed the HDV

London's anti-austerity and housing activism

The StopHDV campaign was formed at the end of 2016, but it emerged from earlier organising as part of a loosely connected set of urban social movements challenging austerity urbanism and the speculative city in London. Campaigners against the HDV gained insights and support from the effervescence of political organising and resistance around the 2008 global financial crisis and its aftermath.

The speculative city is in many ways a product of the state response to the 2008 financial crisis, which propped up banks, property values and private debt, while subjecting public services and social infrastructure to funding cuts and sell-offs (French et al. 2009; Gough 2011). This international conjuncture produced sharp inequalities in cities like London, where the powerful financial sector was bailed out by government as diverse working-class communities faced increasing precarity. Such injustices were not suffered quietly. Refusing to accept the social violence of austerity, groups of workers, tenants, traders, youth, students and public service users mobilised – in more or less organised and disruptive forms – to occupy, protest and organise for more socially just urban futures (Halvorsen 2017; Mayer 2013; Taibo 2013).

Many of those who participated in the StopHDV campaign were active in these challenges to cutbacks, closures, displacement and gentrification. Some were veterans of movements preceding them. These post-crisis mobilisations invigorated political action and relationships across London and would underpin StopHDV. They also inspired a less hierarchical and bureaucratic approach to organising compared to the traditions of municipal Labourism and some trade unions. That experience led activists to create a more concerted and inclusive campaign when other channels were jammed up with factionalism or proceduralism.

Anti-austerity organising was intertwined with a proliferation of housing-based campaigns in London politicising the city's 'acute, pervasive and socially explosive housing crisis' (Beswick et al. 2016, 231). Among them were estate-based campaigns set up by social tenants to fight against managed decline, demolition and the displacement of their communities under the guise of 'regeneration'. Wider networks challenged evictions, council practices of housing people outside the city and speculative profit-led development. New private tenants' unions were working to organise so-called unorganisable renters across the city's fragmented patchwork of small-scale landlords (Wills 2016; Wilde 2019).

Many tenants and housing activists mobilised initially over threats to their physical homes, for reasons including disrepair, eviction and demolition. Over time, these campaigns and networks fed into and strengthened one another. In the process of coming together, they began to cohere into a loosely connected city-wide movement confronting domicide as the intentional destruction of the home in its social and decommodified form (Duxbury & McCabe 2015; Madden & Marcuse 2016).

This movement offered critical insights that campaigners would draw on to develop counternarratives to the HDV. These included the financial risks that joint ventures pose to local authorities, the unequal nature of the relationship between property firms and local authorities, and the unlikely prospect of private developers delivering new social housing. While these perspectives are expressed across the political spectrum, StopHDV also drew on more left-leaning critiques of joint ventures as Trojan horses for the privatisation of public land and housing. As sister campaigns warned, speculative regeneration elsewhere had entailed the destruction of council housing and the mass displacement of working-class tenants and leaseholders. Accordingly, StopHDV took up the rallying cry of 'Social housing, not social cleansing' that had been articulated by protesters against eviction at the Carpenters Estate in Newham, east London (Watt 2018). Experienced housing activists were important proponents of this narrative, but it also emerged from, and resonated widely with, estate residents. Although many were not the so-called 'usual suspects' on the political scene, they were deeply familiar with the managed decline and stigmatisation of their homes and communities. Calling people to join a demonstration in 2017, one StopHDV poster read:

> Defend your neighbours . . . Haringey Council are signing off on the biggest land-grab in the history of social housing in the UK . . . This attempt at gentrification and social cleansing will not only affect homes and the poorest communities in our borough, but also libraries, schools, open spaces, small independent traders, youth, care and day centres . . . NO PERMISSION FOR DEMOLITION!

The London-wide movement against the speculative city connected with a range of organisations locally. Within Haringey, 'inherited movement cultures and organisations' (Mayer 2017, 299) provided a crucial foundation of relationships, resources, experience and expertise. For

example, the community branch of the Unite union was an important contributor. The Liberal Democrat party helped to defeat the council leadership. And a resurgent left in the Labour Party, revivifying branch meetings, was also important for the campaign. Haringey is unusual in the strength of these 'integrative structures' of trade unions and political parties, which now have little organising power in many other places (Bennett & Segerberg 2013).

Grassroots community organisations and networks were also critical. Several of these are particularly worth mentioning. The Haringey branch of the Defend Council Housing network was influential in identifying the significance of the regeneration plans. Local coalition Our Tottenham set a precedent for building broad alliances and was a conduit for information sharing in the early stages of the HDV. And Northumberland Park Decides, an estate-based organising and mutual aid group, came to play a vital role in informing and mobilising council tenants.

Resistance and resilience: Haringey's housing activists and local organising

The first to sound the alarm over the HDV was Haringey Defend Council Housing, an established group dedicated to council housing issues. It is part of Defend Council Housing (DCH), a long-standing network of grassroots campaigning groups around the country whose aim is to preserve, improve and expand council housing. Supported by several trade unions and some Labour MPs (Watt 2021), DCH undertakes sustained scrutiny of council activities and develops critical insights into the implications of redevelopment for council and social tenants. It also works occasionally with local councils to push for investment by national government.

In Haringey, the group has been tracking and challenging housing policies since 1999, including precursors to the HDV such as the outsourcing of council housing management, increased rents and estate demolition. It has made sustained efforts to obtain information from supportive councillors and offer them critical analysis, laying the groundwork for collaboration over the HDV. Indeed, 'the foundations for Stop HDV were built over many years, through a series of local campaigns by Haringey DCH' (Smyth 2018).

Through this experience, activists have developed a wealth of expertise and a strong institutional memory of how to engage critically with the local state, including developing skills to navigate complex official documents and procedures. As well as acting as a repository of historical

knowledge, DCH has contributed to wider networks, sharing insights and solidarity across different places facing similar threats (Figure 4.1). Housing and anti-gentrification movements around London and beyond formed an important resource for StopHDV (Watt 2021). In particular, they helped to share cautionary tales, such as the massive loss of council housing and displacement caused by the demolition of the Heygate Estate for Lendlease's developments in Elephant and Castle, south London (Lees & Ferreri 2016). Internationally, StopHDV exchanged important insights about Lendlease's 'appalling track record' with activists and critical journalists in Australia, according to campaigner Gordon Peters.

By following official plans for estate demolitions, DCH was quick to recognise the emergence of an ambitious agenda for state-led gentrification and social cleansing in the early 2010s. As Paul Burnham, its long-standing secretary, recollected:

> In 2012, the council started having plans to demolish and redevelop the Love Lane estate by the Spurs football ground. Initially, that was a single estate redevelopment . . . Then at the end of 2013, they produced a document, written in their usual vague way, in which they talked with sweeping statements about redeveloping all the main estates in Tottenham. That's obviously state-led gentrification and what inevitably follows from it, which is social cleansing. So at that time, 2014, the council was talking about doing a series of redevelopments. But then they had this idea that rather than have 20 different redevelopment sites, 20 different development partners, and 20 different types of plans and so on, wouldn't it be a great idea if they rolled them all into one big company: the HDV?

Accustomed to combing through official council documentation, DCH helped a wider audience understand the significance of the council's plans, which were 'hiding in plain sight', said campaigner Hilary Adams. Their work informed tenants and residents on estates that might be affected, and fed into the campaign to stop the HDV, which began to coalesce in late 2016:

> StopHDV used all the research which we'd done on the reports into the HDV . . . They'd had council reports back with 1600 pages, I think it was, of which many were redacted – 1100 pages – and we collaborated between us to read it through. This gave a very clear picture of what was likely to go wrong from our point of view with the HDV. (Paul Burnham)

Figure 4.1 March against the demolition of the Cressingham Gardens estate in Lambeth, south London, December 2017. StopHDV supporters attended and spoke alongside anti-austerity groups such as Disabled People Against Cuts and the Defend the 10 campaign against library closures in the borough. Photo: Gordon Peters.

Haringey DCH was also a founding member of Our Tottenham, a large local coalition formed in 2013 to challenge the model of regeneration that the council had set out in *A plan for Tottenham*. (A key instigator was Dave Morris, who had strong links around the borough through his role as secretary of the Housing Federation of Residents' Associations and involvement in other community organisations.) They set out a class-based and implicitly anti-racist critique. Our Tottenham viewed the plan as part of a broader assault on workers and communities across 'housing rights, benefits, wages and public services' (Our Tottenham 2013). They were also concerned about commercial gentrification and the loss of diverse, locally owned, often migrant-led businesses (Clossick 2014; Hall 2011): 'corporate chains are being encouraged to colonise Tottenham High Road to displace many of the local independent shops'. Against this, Our Tottenham advocated for bottom-up approaches, pointing to local precedents, including 'the community-led regeneration of Broadwater Farm estate in the 1990s, the recent £5m makeover of Lordship Recreation Ground led by park users, the Community Centres run by community groups for decades . . . and the ongoing efforts of the Wards Corner Community Coalition to save and regenerate their area of Seven Sisters' (Our Tottenham 2013; see Chapter 6 for more on Wards Corner).

Over 30 local organisations endorsed the 'Our Tottenham' charter in April 2013,[1] which celebrated the area as 'a great place with a rich social and architectural history, made up of vibrant, diverse and talented communities'. They pledged to support 'community-led development plans' and a 'regeneration action network', which would defend and improve social infrastructures, the local economy and the environment (Our Tottenham 2014, 31). In mid-2016, the Our Tottenham planning group (which included members of DCH) used the public examination of the Haringey Local Plan to raise concerns about the council's 'disastrous estate renewal strategy' and the HDV, which did not offer council tenants or leaseholders a right to return after demolition, and exposed tenants to huge potential rent increases (Our Tottenham 2016, 6).

In mid-2016 DCH helped to found Northumberland Park Decides (NPD) – another important grassroots group that predates the StopHDV coalition. Northumberland Park is a large council estate in north Tottenham (Figure 4.2), home to a diverse community facing high rates

Figure 4.2 Some of the homes on Northumberland Park estate that would have been demolished for the HDV, 2017. Photo: Clive Carter, 2017.

of deprivation. Situated next to the Tottenham Hotspur football stadium, it was one of the HDV's chief sites for redevelopment. NPD aimed to provide a counterpoint to official sources that presented a favourable account of the HDV, and to support community-based challenges to estate demolition, especially without a right to return.

NPD worked to sustain and strengthen the community through direct material and social support. The group hosted regular meetings to bring together tenants and residents on Northumberland Park estate, including 'a food and social programme, one day a week. It was a kind of open-door session that was open to anyone to relax, chat, have tea and coffee, and have some food. It was a way of addressing social isolation and helping people new to the area, especially newly arrived migrants, connect with others locally,' explained Alison Davy, who lives on the estate and helped to set up NPD. Another function of NPD was to challenge the denigration of the estate and put forward an alternative perspective from the community. As Alison put it:

> The press around Northumberland Park estate has always been horrible as far as I know, and I have lived here since 1996 . . . I think those attitudes weighed very heavily on all of the people who lived in Northumberland Park . . . I'm not saying that there aren't any problems that need support and need help. The buildings need refurbishment, the community centres need to be reopened and staffed – all of those sorts of things have to happen. But the narrative was that Northumberland Park needed to be knocked down. That made people very sad on top of all of the other struggles that they were already facing.

NPD recognised that 'Community can be lifesaving': under difficult circumstances, local friends and services are 'what sustains you in life', Alison added. Instead of immediately seeking to engage people in campaigning, NPD began by bringing people together and celebrating the estate's community. In doing so, it sought to dismantle barriers to political activity by reinforcing social infrastructures of connection. Reinforcing these forms of resilience is often a precondition for resistance (Katz 2004).

Through NPD, some council tenants on the estate became engaged for the first time in active and organised resistance to their landlord. Unsurprisingly, one topic of conversation at NPD meetings was the HDV, which Alison and others had become concerned about, in part because of the lack of clear information from the council. 'That's one of the

reasons why StopHDV became so popular, because nobody knew what was going on. People used to stop me in the street and say, "What's going on with this housing? We've heard it's being demolished, but where are we going to go?",' said Northumberland Park resident Franklin Thomas. Many distrusted the council because of the managed decline of the estate, which had intensified under austerity. Franklin recalled, 'There's many, many, many examples of the council letting people down . . .' By 2017, the group was hosting fortnightly meetings to discuss the HDV and learn about housing rights in a space provided by the late Reverend Paul Nicolson, a champagne salesman turned worker-priest in Tottenham who had fought poverty and the poll tax (Nicolson 2020).

NPD meetings were regularly attended by a few dozen people, of diverse ethnicities, ages and tenures, mostly from the estate. Franklin Thomas described them as a mixture of activists and 'people on the street' who hadn't been politically active before. He himself had 'never been a political person', but recognised that 'it's in the power of the people to help themselves'. Participants were drawn in through social media, local papers, door-knocking and several rounds of mass leafletting of homes. Especially dramatic was a council map of the planned demolitions that showed homes which were set to be knocked down (Figure 4.3). It revealed that the HDV would not only raze council homes but also threaten many leaseholders and tenants of housing associations.

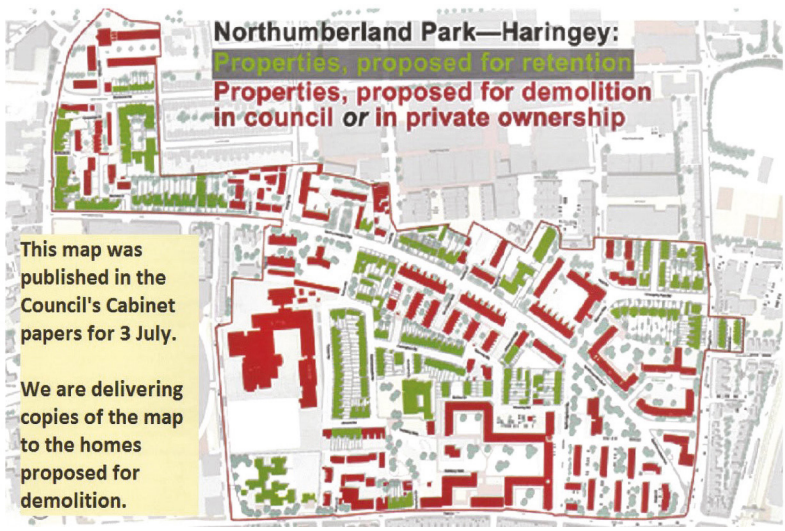


Figure 4.3 Map of proposed demolitions in Northumberland Park, 2017. Source: Flyer produced for Haringey Defend Council Housing, 2017, reproduced with the permission of Paul Burnham.

NPD encouraged people to contact their councillors, go to Haringey Civic Centre to put their case to the local leadership and join StopHDV campaign meetings in other parts of the borough. They made banners with a local artist and prepared for demos, some of which went through the estate. These were community- and tenant-based political activities; they were not a 'hard-left takeover of the estate' (Alison Davy), as the HDV's advocates sometimes claimed.

Creating a borough-wide coalition

Haringey DCH, Our Tottenham and NPD played a crucial role in initiating and sustaining the challenge to the HDV. However, regeneration precedents suggest that, without wider mobilisation, these groups would have struggled to defeat the plans, especially given the secretive and determined way in which the council leadership was pursuing its agenda. Crucially, the initiating groups brought the HDV to the attention of some critically minded councillors. They acted as a conduit to a larger pool of solidarity networks, planning activists and political party members. These connections mobilised a local ecology of organisations committed to Haringey as a progressive and diverse place, linking with anti-austerity resistance in London's post-crisis political economy.

Other studies of social movements have argued that for activist and marginalised groups to achieve change it is 'crucial that *those parts of the movement sector that enjoy some stability, access, resources, and networks* devote part of their struggle to creating a political and social climate where marginalized groups can become visible and express themselves' (Mayer 2017, 301, emphasis added). In Haringey, however, there was little support for the campaign from any 'institutionalized, professionalized, or entrepreneurial movements which . . . benefit from routinized cooperation with the local state' (Mayer 2017, 301). That kind of cooperation was limited by the council's top-down approach and the dissolution of many advocacy and provider groups under neoliberalism and austerity. Instead, a more insurgent approach emerged.

The appetite to challenge financialised austerity urbanism was evident in the large-scale protests, occupations of public space, youth uprisings and networks that had emerged in the preceding years. After Jeremy Corbyn was elected leader of the Labour Party in 2015, some hoped that these movements' demands for radical change would find expression through national government. Many on the left joined Momentum to support a left-wing programme in the party. However,

grassroots radicalism collided with inherited cultures of bureaucratic proceduralism and incrementalism. It was at a Haringey Momentum meeting in late 2016 that some key organisers first began to mobilise around the HDV. At a packed gathering, those present voted to call on Labour to oppose the HDV. But many were disappointed at the political timidity of the responses proposed at that meeting, including by some councillors. This prompted them to start a separate campaign. As Phil Rose, who was at that time the chair of Haringey Momentum, recalled:

> The starting point of the campaign is my most vivid memory . . . we had a Momentum meeting to discuss the Haringey Development Vehicle. Councillor Zena Brabazon came along to tell us what it was all about. The reason it was memorable was because of the negativity of the meeting, which forced us to go and start the campaign on our own [independently of Momentum]. Momentum were not interested in any actual campaign. Councillors just wanted us to write in and complain . . . So myself and Phil Jackson had a phone call and we decided to set up a march to get people involved . . . and the march was very successful and very big. And from that we realised we couldn't stop there and so we needed to set up a campaign. That always sticks with me as the starting point because then it just took off itself. It kicked into a sense of anger amongst local activists.

The failure to agree a concerted and confrontational challenge to the HDV at this meeting sparked the creation of an independent grassroots campaign to stop the HDV, organised by people of diverse political affiliations and none, outside Labour and Momentum. The aim was to build power through an active, broad-based coalition rather than relying on councillors to lead the charge. The campaign expanded rapidly: a demonstration in January 2017 attracted hundreds of participants (see Chapter 5).

The emergence of such a campaign built on existing, locally led solidarity networks, which had a valuable inheritance of political experience grounded in progressive critiques and values. That experience had generated social ties and relationships of trust, which underpinned StopHDV. These networks also channelled some small but significant institutional resources to the coalition. As campaigner Doug Thorpe recalled, 'a lot of us had worked with one another on various things over the years . . . a lot of those personal relationships were pretty good to

begin with'. As noted above, Haringey DCH and Our Tottenham were important examples of the borough's organisational ecology, anticipating and animating the coalition against the HDV. Other long-standing local networks also lent their support. For example, the Haringey Solidarity Group had roots in the anti-poll tax campaign and was convening anti-austerity activism via the Haringey Alliance for Public Services. The group helped to raise awareness around the borough by covering the HDV in its regular newsletter.

Trade unions were also important, and several StopHDV campaigners were active members. Unions offered StopHDV training in social media, solidarity on demonstrations and support for producing campaign materials and room hire. Especially crucial were members of Unite Community, which is open to retired and unemployed people, and others without a workplace branch. The Haringey and London branches of Unite Community leveraged their profile, membership and resources to support the StopHDV cause, becoming the 'organising focus' for the campaign, according to Gordon Peters. The role of this community-based branch demonstrates the importance of union organising beyond employment, around social issues like austerity and housing that condition the experience of workers and the wider population (Wills & Simms 2004). Whereas political parties and unions are often seen as distinct from bottom-up political action (Bennett & Segerberg 2013), here they were platforms for decentralised initiative.

Individual institutional agendas were subordinated to the common goal of stopping the HDV and defending the homes, local businesses and communities that gave people a shared sense of place. 'A lot of people came together from different groups in Tottenham. It was a group effort,' said Franklin Thomas. As Phil Rose remarked: 'The focus was on being citizens or residents of Haringey, not party members.' This non-sectarian ethos helped to bring together Liberal Democrats, Greens and people from the centre and left of the Labour Party, as well as more radical left groups and participants in urban conservation groups, sometimes referred to as 'community planning elites' (Dillon & Fanning 2011).

This emergent coalition had no clear strategic playbook to follow, despite the involvement of a few experienced 'elite' planning activists who were skilled in monitoring new developments and using official procedures to challenge plans. Writing in the period before StopHDV, Dennis Dillon (a former Haringey councillor) and Bryan Fanning describe the power disparities between Tottenham's residents, treated dismissively or paternalistically by the council, and the influential 'elite' groups in the west of the borough. There, organisations such as the Highgate Society

have long assembled the expertise of architects, lawyers and others to scrutinise the council's planning decisions. Between 1965 and 1992, groups in the west were almost twice as likely to influence planning decisions as residents of eastern Haringey (Dillon & Fanning 2011, 77). Gail Waldman, a retired architect involved in civil society associations in Highgate, was familiar with historical struggles over how Haringey Council governs its assets, as well as with broader planning debates. She was invited to advise a scrutiny committee of councillors, and recalled that some representatives were shocked to hear that the HDV's affordable housing commitments were likely to be cut as the developer revised its assessment of commercial viability.

The involvement of such professionals in the StopHDV movement was an unusual instance of solidarity across the wealthy west of Haringey and the poorer eastern areas of Tottenham, reflecting the borough-wide scale of the HDV. Such people have made a key contribution to other London campaigns in terms of critique, tactics and social capital (Lees & Ferreri 2016), but their contribution was less decisive in the more broad-based StopHDV coalition. Indeed, some of the borough's most established planning groups, such as the Highgate Society, shared supportive information about the campaign but did not formally back it, reflecting the uneven socio-spatial impacts that the HDV would have had (Highgate Society 2018). Greater solidarity came from other tenant and trader campaigns in Tottenham, including TAG Love Lane (opposing the demolition of a council housing estate by the Spurs stadium) and Save Latin Village (defending the Latin American market from redevelopment).

Drawing on social movement practices rather than the bureaucratic traditions of political parties, StopHDV cultivated deeper participation and the capacity to pursue multiple tactics. The campaign was organised through a focused core group and a larger, non-hierarchical 'Occupy style of more spontaneous organising', said Gordon Peters. For many of the contributors, the openness of the StopHDV campaign group felt like a refreshing contrast to the closed culture of the council leadership. Making common cause, rather than emphasising people's differences, seemed the antithesis of the council's approach of not listening or budging.

There was no blueprint for the campaign: people could suggest and take on different tasks. Participants volunteered to take on various roles depending on their skills and interests: Gordon Peters chose to develop a legal challenge; Hilary Adams elected to coordinate Freedom of Information requests; Phil Rose set about organising the meetings and fundraising events, and so on. As time went on, a core group of 15–20 people met frequently to coordinate and strategise, taking ideas to large

monthly open meetings which regularly attracted 50 or so people. The larger meetings had a rotating chair. Although most of the core group knew each other from past campaigns, it was never closed – 'if people came along and did work they were welcome', said Phil Rose. There was strength in numbers:

> It was based on open meetings and very open decision-making and lots of people working together inside and outside of the Labour Party . . . There was never a serious argument, as there often is in campaigns, about which strand we have to prioritise. (Doug Thorpe)

The campaign's loose, inclusive and fluid organisation encouraged people – many of whom were new to activism and campaigning – to engage in activities that suited their preferences and capacities, whether through formal tactics such as scrutinising council documents or by undertaking more public-facing activities including door-knocking, making posters and participating in marches. Collectively, these activities allowed the campaign to reach people who weren't plugged into established political networks, said one councillor, and created what Gordon Peters described as a 'huge groundswell'. The abundance of campaigners enabled StopHDV to pursue and create more political opportunities than would otherwise have been the case. Demonstrations also drew in more than the 'usual faces' found at these sorts of events, said Stephanie Grant, who also recalled that 'there were more women involved than in things I have been involved in before'.

Despite the size and inclusive ethos of the coalition, it had some important limitations. Haringey is a young and ethnically diverse borough, and although the campaign had broad support, the most active campaigners were predominantly white and middle aged or older. That profile isn't the inevitable result of inequities in time and resources for organising, as other local campaigns and Black Lives Matter activism show. Rather, it reflects the organisational roots and framing of the campaign. Despite the importance of the 2011 uprising in catalysing the HDV, StopHDV was not always strongly articulated in anti-racist terms.

However, in mid-2017, the deadly fire at Grenfell Tower gave a greater urgency and sharper consciousness of racial injustice to the campaign. At least 72 people were killed in the conflagration in west London. It was a stark display of the consequences of neglectful management and lethally cheap refurbishment, symptomatic of a local authority that treated its racialised working-class residents as interlopers

amid wealthy, whiter enclaves. In the aftermath, protest banners drew the links between the two London neighbourhoods: 'Tottenham stands with Grenfell. Solidarity from Haringey. Stop the HDV'. Campaigner and Northumberland Park resident Franklin Thomas reflected: 'Look at Grenfell. Who's been held accountable? It's time for people to stand up and say no, that's enough – quite enough, let us have a say.' The racialised impacts of the HDV were also highlighted in the legal action initiated that summer. Claimants cited a council document from 2015 which acknowledged that 'there is a possibility that over time Black residents in Haringey may not benefit from the plans to build more homes in the borough through promoting affordable home ownership in east Haringey' (Haringey Council 2015a). Dispossession and domicide would have hit unevenly. As campaigner Melissa Friedberg observed, 'If you looked at the estates that were involved, it's poor people, people from minority groups who were going to be hugely affected. We didn't want people to be relocated somewhere where they're going to be the only minority and not near their communities.' Alongside persistent engagement with estate residents, campaigners increased their efforts to bring in younger, diverse groups, supported by artists, including spoken word poet and community organiser Potent Whisper. The coalition's anti-racist critique sharpened over time.

Momentum and the Labour base

Another influence on the formation of the StopHDV coalition was the wider conjuncture of Labour Party politics. Although the campaign against the HDV was set up independently of Momentum because of different visions of politics and strategy, the coalition did benefit from the groundswell of political optimism and engagement accompanying Jeremy Corbyn's election as Labour leader. Many were inspired by the potential of a radical break from the approach to urban development that the HDV exemplified.

With a left Labour government seeming possible, Labour membership grew in Haringey and beyond. At the beginning of this period, one party member recalled attending ward meetings with only 'two men and a dog, I mean there was literally a dog in the meeting room, it was really quite small'. Following the party's leftward turn in 2015 and its renewed promise to stand 'for the many not the few', numbers at these meetings rose, said campaigner Simon Hester. Local party meetings were an important conduit for making many Labour members aware of the HDV, contributing to the strength of the campaign against it.

The prospect of entering government also encouraged different left factions within and outside Labour to set aside their differences. The HDV provided an obvious target for resistance, with its combination of lost council housing, privatisation and the involvement of a notorious international developer. The Kober cabinet was associated, in their eyes, with New Labour policies of privatisation, public asset sales and private finance initiatives (Hodkinson 2019). However, concern about the HDV was not limited to the left of Labour. Campaigners included people further to the right of the party.

Since dissent within the Labour group of councillors was constrained by the threat of disciplinary procedures for challenging the council leadership, the StopHDV coalition provided an alternative route for critique and mobilisation. As local elections approached in 2018, action within Labour would become an important tactical plank of the campaign (see Chapter 5). Campaigners aimed to make the HDV a litmus test for incumbent and prospective Labour candidates. Momentum played an important role here, helping to highlight the importance of candidate selection meetings and encouraging new members to participate (Rampen 2017). This was an open, democratic process that demanded grassroots mobilisation. Momentum was not in control of these meetings and was not in a position to 'stitch them up'. The Labour candidate selections were closely fought and campaigners were unsure what the outcome would be. Indeed, Kober herself was successful in her bid to be reselected as a candidate. She chose to quit her position after councillors appealed to Labour's national governing committee for protection for dissenting on the HDV. Recognising the divisiveness of the plans, the committee told Kober that, unless an agreement could be reached through mediation, a decision on the HDV should be taken only after the local elections. Popular mobilisation within – and crucially beyond – the Labour Party made clear that the council lacked a local mandate to pursue its plans. But despite the restrictions on internal dissent, several councillors played an important role in overturning the HDV.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have mapped out the composition and character of the grassroots coalition that successfully disrupted the speculative city in Haringey. Throughout we have demonstrated that it was not a narrow militant faction within the local Labour Party. Nor was the struggle over the HDV simply a local reflection of a national battle for the heart and

soul of Labour. Such misrepresentations purposely seek to delegitimise the campaign and to discredit the content and form of urban politics by which it was animated. They frame StopHDV as the misguided, infantile efforts of the 'loony left', or more sinisterly as an organised coup bent on purging the council of its moderate 'grown-up' politicians. In either case, so the story goes, the campaign did not reflect the will of ordinary Haringey tenants, residents or traders.

Against this revisionist and reactionary account, we have shown that StopHDV was underpinned by a politically and socially diverse infrastructure of people, organisations and networks from across the borough. Some of those in the coalition, including key members of the campaign, did participate in Momentum meetings, and some even held positions in the group. But Momentum was hardly a tightly run factional cabal. Rather, it was a disorganised vehicle that could scarcely contain the lively effervescence of democratic socialist politics unleashed in London by the global financial crisis and the onset of financialised austerity urbanism.

The coalition was strongly influenced and animated by – and would become an important part of – the post-2008 moment of anti-austerity and housing justice politics across London. The ideological content of the campaign's critique of the HDV and the horizontal, open and fluid organising form that it took owed much to these urban social movements. More than just inspiration, the campaign drew support and advice from other campaigns across London, and many StopHDV campaigners offered their solidarity to those fighting the speculative city outside Haringey, joining their protests and meetings.

At the same time, the coalition of activists, tenants, residents, traders, trade unionists and councillors who came together in the StopHDV campaign were united in common cause by the urgent need to defend their local communities against the threat of dispossession and displacement. In other words, it was a place-based movement committed to protecting diverse working-class homes, social infrastructures and livelihoods. It also carried with it the demand for deeper democracy – for the rights of ordinary people to collectively determine the nature, scale and pace of urban development and change. Organising across the borough's social and political diversity was made possible by the existing lively grassroots infrastructure of activists, organisations and networks. This ecology was especially vibrant in Haringey, home to a strong tradition of progressive, democratic socialist and radical politics confronting the area's extreme inequalities.

Uniting a large and diverse coalition was no mean feat. Crucial here was not just the threat posed to many by the HDV, but also the campaign's approach to organising, decision-making and action which allowed it to make full use of the coalition's energies and experience. The campaign was flexible and open, inspired partly by social movements which distinguished it from the more bureaucratic style of older political structures. Different participants made distinctive contributions. Experienced local activists carried out the routine and mundane work of scrutiny, which played a vital role in exposing and politicising the council's project. Without Haringey DCH, Our Tottenham and some critically minded councillors, the HDV may have been signed off before a coalition against it could have been formed. Established housing activists also encouraged a small number of critical councillors to investigate and challenge the plans that the council leadership were advancing with little open debate. Collaboration between councillors and grassroots campaigners would prove especially important. As backbenchers used formal procedures to question the leadership's plans, public pressure in the streets and the council chamber empowered these members to challenge the HDV more fully. In turn, the councillors engaged with locally led solidarity networks, some of which were linked to political parties, trade unions and wider organising – but it was volunteers within the borough who took the initiative against the HDV, forming an independent coalition.

Other organisations, most notably NPD, ensured that the coalition was open to, and in many respects grounded in, the concerns and experiences of council tenants on estates that would be most affected by the HDV. Underpinning the campaign's success were activities supporting the essential resilience of council estates: gatherings for social connection against exclusion, and for recognising the value of the place in the face of its stigmatisation. Many 'novice activists' (Watt 2021) joined the StopHDV campaign because of the work of this group. As well as attending meetings, they door-knocked, leafletted, marched and protested.

As we show in the next chapter, the openness and inclusivity of the StopHDV campaign was a condition of its success. It enabled the campaign to draw effectively on the skills, expertise and energy of its diverse supporters. This gave the campaign legitimacy and credibility with different communities, and it brought sufficient capacity to experiment with a range of tactics – taking and making different opportunities as they presented themselves. It was the range and combination of tactics that would ultimately prove instrumental in defeating this expression of the speculative city.

Note

1 The Our Tottenham coalition included: Bull Lane Playing Fields Campaign/Weir Hall Action Group, Chestnuts Community Centre, Clyde Area Residents Association, Day-Mer, Defend Haringey Health Services, Dissident Sound Industry Studios, Efiba Arts, Find Your Voice, Friends of Downhills Park, Friends of Lordship Rec, Growing-in-Haringey network, Haringey Alliance for Public Services, Haringey Defend Council Housing, Haringey Federation of Residents Associations, Haringey Friends of Parks Forum, Haringey Green Party, Haringey Housing Action Group, Haringey Independent Cinema, Haringey Justice for Palestinians, Haringey Left Unity, Haringey Living Streets, Haringey Needs St Ann's Hospital, Haringey Private Tenants Action Group, Haringey Solidarity Group, Haringey Trades Union Council, Living Under One Sun, Lord Morrison Hall/Afro International, Lordship Rec Eco-Hub Co-op, N. London Community House, People's World Carnival Band, Selby Centre, The Banc, Tottenham and Wood Green Friends of the Earth, Tottenham Chances, Tottenham Civic Society, Tottenham Community Choir, Tottenham Community Sports Centre, Tottenham Concerned Residents Committee, Tottenham Constitutional Club, Tottenham Rights, Tottenham Theatre, Tottenham Traders Partnership, Tower Gardens Residents Group, Tynemouth Area Residents Association, Ubele, University and College Union at CONEL, Urban Tattoo, Wards Corner Community Coalition, 1000 Mothers March Organising Group, 20's Plenty for Haringey.

5
Disruption: tactics in and against the local real estate state

Introduction

In this chapter we explain how the StopHDV campaign disrupted the speculative city. Presenting the testimonies and reflections of those who were at the heart of the action, we identify the tactics campaigners deployed to prevent an unprecedented project of municipal-corporate accumulation by dispossession. Whilst recognising the conditions that shaped the coalition's emergence, form and success, we emphasise the persistence, ingenuity and creativity that went into the campaign – giving voice and credit to those who played pivotal roles. We also hope to capture a sense of the emotional experience and drama of grassroots resistance.

The StopHDV campaign did not have a predetermined strategy for derailing the HDV. There was no clear path to victory at the outset and precedent was against them. In the previous chapter we discussed the work of coalition-building across diverse socio-economic infrastructures, which raised awareness, shared information and channelled the energy, expertise and capacity of people. Drawing on their strength in numbers, range of skills and different kinds of knowledge, the campaign pursued a flexible and at times opportunistic strategy composed of a broad repertoire of tactics (see Table 5.1). Here, we place particular emphasis on tactics of institutional insurgency, public demonstrations, judicial politics and party-political organising. These tactics unfolded across a variety of spaces in, against and beyond the local real estate state – 'a political formation in which real estate capital has an inordinate influence over the shape of our cities, the parameters of our politics and the lives we lead' (Stein 2019, 5). Campaigners made strategic use of formal state spaces such as the council chamber, the Royal Courts of Justice and

Table 5.1: Tactics employed to challenge the HDV

Intervention	What it involved	How it worked
Coalition building	Campaigners organised through: regular open public meetings to share information and to strategise; meetings on council estates to raise awareness and discuss concerns; door knocking and leafletting on estates to counter what they saw as council disinformation and to mobilise people; and attending other housing campaign events across London to raise awareness, make connections and share ideas	The organising efforts of the campaigners had several tangible effects. They helped to bring together a diverse coalition of people; raised awareness by making sense of the HDV in terms of people's everyday lives and wider political narratives; and created the space for diverse people, with different skills and interests, to come together and work on their own interventions
Institutional insurgency	Discontented ward councillors used local government procedures and spaces to scrutinise and challenge the cabinet's decision-making. They were supported by campaigners who submitted numerous Freedom of Information (FOI) requests and who helped read and analyse lengthy policy documents	This work provided important scrutiny and developed a critical counter-analysis, shining a light on the detail of the council's policies and plans, and making sense of these in terms of people's everyday lives and wider political narratives. Council scrutiny meetings also provided moments of drama around which campaigners could mobilise, raising the political stakes for other councillors and helping to polarise positions
Marching & protesting	Campaigners organised seven marches and staged protests around important decision-making moments in the council. They created posters to advertise these events, organised the routes, and encouraged people to be loud and enthusiastic	The marches and protests made visible in public the depth of feeling and strength in numbers and diversity of those who were against the council's plans, undermining attempts to dismiss the campaign as narrow and factional. They put pressure on local councillors and drew wider attention to the campaign. They also motivated campaigners, providing them with a stronger sense of unity and possibility

Media & social media	StopHDV created simple messages and logos, and offered detailed evidence and critical analysis via their own channels and through continuous contact with journalists	The campaign's own communications – plus coverage in local, national, international and specialist housing/local government media – played a crucial role in building greater awareness, pressure and participation
Judicial Review (JR)	The court case against the HDV entailed a significant amount of work. That included: fundraising to cover some of the legal expenses; submitting FOI requests; and compiling documentary evidence. This was a joint effort by the campaigners and their legal team	The JR provided important scrutiny and helped develop a critical counter-analysis of the HDV. Critically, the JR also delayed the council's decision-making and actions, providing the campaign with much-needed time to build momentum before the local elections
Party political organising	StopHDV activists and members of the local Labour Party tried to ensure that candidates opposed to the HDV were selected to stand in council elections in 2018, with support from councillors critical of the HDV. Eventually the national Labour leadership also called for a decision on the HDV to be postponed until councillors had a new electoral mandate	Organising within the structures of the local Labour Party helped to ensure that the HDV became a polarised wedge issue for prospective councillors, making it hard for them not to take a clear stance. It increased the political costs of supporting the HDV, held local representatives to account for their actions and undermined the political legitimacy of the leadership

local Labour Party meetings. Equally important was the work they put into relationship-building and organising in everyday spaces, on council estates, in community theatre, on doorsteps and in the streets.

Alone, no single tactic would have been sufficient, but in combination they proved effective. We show how campaigners were able to: discover hidden information and reveal local state inconsistencies; undermine the council's epistemic authority and legitimacy; develop a critical counternarrative that resonated with people's everyday experiences and wider politics; challenge the denigration of the places and communities targeted for redevelopment; provide moments of drama around which campaigners could mobilise and build public pressure; delay council decisions and processes; politicise and polarise the issue to pressure councillors; and erode the leadership's majority in favour of the plans. They also created opportunities for fun, friendship and collective joy.

The combination of tactics discussed below does not offer a clear blueprint for others to follow: the campaigners pursued these tactics creatively in a particular geographical and historical moment. The leftward turn of the Labour Party nationally from 2015, the corresponding surge in party membership locally, the missteps and miscalculations of the council leadership and the timing of local elections were all critically important. But the campaigners were successful because they had built the capacity to respond and adapt to opportunities as they presented themselves, whilst also creating their own openings. We aim to show what worked, how and why, in the hope of inspiring and being useful to others.

Institutional insurgency: allying with critical councillors

In the first part of this book, we situated and critiqued the executive leadership's development of the HDV in relation to a wider set of social relations shaping the local state and its interests as part of the speculative city. But the local state is not determined by these relations and nor is it a singular actor; it is a site of struggle in which social movements may be able to find strategically placed allies working in and against its institutions.

Crucial to StopHDV's success was the collaboration between grassroots groups and an initially small set of sympathetic councillors. Given the institutional power of the council executive under the strong leader model, internal challenges by discontented councillors using formal procedures would have been of limited use on their own. But they were effective when combined with public pressure. Working together,

campaigners and a handful of councillors were able to use council spaces and procedures to make critical information and counternarratives public, frustrate the progress and realisation of the HDV, and produce moments of drama around which local people could rally.

In the 2010s, Haringey Council's executive members were heirs of a municipal Labourism tradition (Blackburn 2020), in which politics and power were monopolised by the leadership of the local party and state. They were poised to fuse the local state with a global property developer. Yet there had been little deliberation on the HDV with the rest of the local councillors. Although the council leadership had been laying the groundwork for the Lendlease deal for years, the plans were poorly understood by many of those responsible for scrutinising them, according to two councillors.

Concerted scrutiny of the HDV within Haringey Council emerged in large part thanks to local housing activists, specifically members of Haringey Defend Council Housing (DCH), who had long been working to strengthen relationships with locally elected politicians. This took several months of effort, including speaking in frustratingly stage-managed fora:

> It became clear that the council had a big demolition agenda that was coming forward around the end of 2013. And as part of that we did deputations to various council meetings – there's supposed to be a process where you go along and give your views and you're asked questions about it. But under the Kober regime, it was very much a case of, you speak for three minutes and then they just say 'next'. (Paul Burnham, DCH)

Eventually, DCH managed to bring the HDV to the attention of some members on the left of the local Labour Party, as well as other councillors with different political commitments.[1]

To properly scrutinise the HDV, a few concerned councillors on the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel began a review of the HDV in mid-2016.[2] Members of the panel gathered a wealth of evidence, often working alongside campaigners. They pored over lengthy official documents, fired questions at the council leaders and officers, sought advice and elicited expert testimonials from academics, including Loretta Lees and Michael Edwards, and winkled out records through Freedom of Information (FOI) requests submitted by grassroots campaigners (Hilary Adams and Martin Ball in particular). These exposed what many viewed as scandalous levels of 'privileged access' to senior council decision-makers for major developers.

The panel also gained insights from case studies of other local authorities. Fearful of facing disciplinary action for questioning the HDV, one member held a clandestine meeting in Croydon, south London with councillor and local journalist Steve Downes about 'CCURV', an ill-fated £450 million development vehicle. In 2020, failed property deals in that borough contributed to Croydon Council declaring bankruptcy. Panel members were also warned against joint ventures by members of a Conservative district council:

> When asked if they would put the council's housing stock into such a venture, they may as well have said, 'Are you mad?!' They said they would never do that because they look after their social housing. They felt the whole thing was more or less a scam led by people from Mayfair who did not know their area at all. (Councillor)

Based on this evidence, the panel delivered a critical report in January 2017. This stated that a 'fundamental democratic deficit [was] inherent' to the project and that 'What the Council, and by extension its tenants and residents, gain from the proposed HDV was far less clear than what it and they stand to lose' (HRSP 2017, 1). The report concluded that since 'there are no governance arrangements that adequately mitigate the risks of this scheme', the HDV should be halted and further scrutinised (HRSP 2017, 1).

Thanks in part to this review, the local press started to describe the HDV as 'deeply controversial'. Opposition within the council grew to encompass a significant minority (up to a third) of backbench councillors (Youle 2016). The council leadership, however, was uninterested in the report's recommendations to halt the plans, showing little concern about the 'very significant risks' the HDV posed and selectively ignoring expertise contradicting that of their own commercial advisers and preferred partner. Clive Carter, then a Liberal Democrat councillor, recalled:

> The several pre-existing failures of joint ventures [JVs] elsewhere were simply ignored, dismissed and disregarded . . . All those that I'm aware of failed one way or another. Haringey *would not* learn from their experience. And ignored expert evidence, provided for free, for example, by urban Professor Loretta Lees who came to the council to give evidence to a housing scrutiny panel. In its design, Haringey's HDV was an extreme or unique example of the type. As far as I know, no other Local Authority even attempted to include their

> social housing into such a financial arrangement. Quite apart from the evidence that none of the failed JVs elsewhere remotely equalled the scale of the deal.

Even relatively minor changes and alternatives presented by the panel – including, for example, that recently upgraded flats be preserved against demolition – were rejected by the cabinet (HRSP 2017). Underlining the 'inherent' democratic deficits the panel had raised, the cabinet noted that future activities of the HDV could not be 'meaningfully addressed at this stage' (that is, until specific development projects were masterplanned) and that as an 'independent body' the HDV would not be 'subjected to the Council's scrutiny function in the same way [as the Council]' (Haringey Council 2017c, 1).

As concern among some councillors grew, public pressure was also building thanks to the awareness-raising efforts of campaigners. Together, the coalition and critical councillors formed an effective pincer movement that had one foot in the street, another in the institutions. This was on vivid display at the January 2017 meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee which considered the Housing Panel's report. Unusually for such a meeting, the public gallery was packed: hundreds of people concerned about the HDV had turned out to fill the chamber and protest outside. Emboldened by their energy, Councillor Stuart McNamara called not simply for tweaks to the plans, but for a six-month delay to allow much deeper investigation. A standing ovation from the gallery created huge pressure in the room to support a halt. The presiding officers were forced to hold a vote and the motion to pause the HDV was passed. Another councillor recalled this as a turning point that sparked more opportunities for public contestation:

> This theatre and drama was so important. This set the campaign off. It helped to create momentum behind the idea of completely getting rid of the HDV. This meeting set out a whole new trajectory. The cabinet later rejected the proposal to halt the HDV. But, of course, the meeting at which they had to do that created another moment for the campaign to make itself visible on the streets, outside the town hall, and in the gallery.

Combining internal institutional challenges with external public pressure in this way, campaigners and councillors transformed council procedures: rather than official channels simply funnelling dissent into bureaucratic

revisions, meetings like this one became political opportunities to contest the HDV. The formal, 'invited' spaces of participation – consultations, deputations and the public gallery in the council chamber – were subverted and expanded by StopHDV's creation of 'invented' spaces of participation – the rowdy gallery, the street, news outlets and social media – 'directly confronting the authorities and the status quo' (Miraftab 2004, 1). This echoed efforts in the 1980s to plant 'a politics of contestation within the state' (Beveridge & Cochrane 2023, 9). For some of the campaigners, the struggle over the HDV recalled a more radical state: they had worked in local government and the public sector before retiring and joining the Unite community branch, a key source of activists and resources for the campaign.

Internationally, social movements have been more likely to succeed if 'protesters possess political allies in city government, and there is a lack of right-wing partisan alignment between their mayors and executives at higher tiers of government' (Pasotti 2020, 4–5). Yet StopHDV had few committed backbench supporters during much of the campaign and they faced the combined might of the council leadership, the Mayor of London and national government, which all championed the demolition of 'sink estates' to unleash financialised urban development. Against such odds, StopHDV's success can be explained in part by a form of institutional insurgency within, against and beyond the local state that was formed through the relationships developed between campaigners and councillors. With one foot in the state and the other on the streets, they forensically scrutinised and dramatically contested the HDV, undermining the executive's epistemic and political authority.

Action by the wider coalition to build, demonstrate and dramatise grassroots opposition was crucial here. As one organiser, Simon Hester, argued, while the action of councillors was important, it was 'created and shaped by the movement outside: without the movement outside, whatever they did within . . . would have made no difference'.

Staging dissent: demos and drama

In the face of evidence warning that the HDV would put social housing provision and local authority finances at risk, the council leadership rejected calls to pause, let alone revise, their plans. With few formal 'pressure valves' in the state through which dissent could be channelled, those concerned about the HDV ramped up a 'contentious politics'

Table 5.2: Demonstrations at key moments in the development of the HDV

December 2016	Supporting demands from councillors on the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel (HRSP) to pause and rethink the HDV
January 2017	Supporting a halt to the HDV as the Overview & Scrutiny Committee considered the recommendations of the HRSP
February 2017	Opposing announcement of preferred private real estate developer partner
June 2017	Supporting concerns raised by councillors on the HRSP in their final report on the HDV
July 2017	Protesting confirmation of Lendlease as partner
September 2017	March across the borough from Tottenham to Finsbury Park
February 2018	Emergency council meeting halts HDV

(Tilly & Tarrow 2015). Throughout 2017 and into 2018, campaigners organised a series of protest demonstrations targeting key moments in official proceedings, within the council chamber and on the streets (see Table 5.2). Some campaigners also staged their dissent by treading the boards of community theatre, creating moments of inspired and collective joy that buoyed the movement whilst taking their message to new audiences.

The StopHDV demonstrations were attended by hundreds, perhaps over a thousand on occasion, from across and beyond the borough. Bringing people together in collective expressions of dissent, these were important moments that showed the council the strength of opposition to the HDV whilst emboldening critical councillors. They also infused the campaign with energy and optimism, making people feel part of a powerful grassroots movement that could win. 'Those sorts of events, people taking a bit of control and taking control of space, it was as if there was momentum building and we weren't going away,' said campaigner Stephanie Grant. Demonstrations generated some of the most vivid moments for many of those involved.

Moreover, the protests fuelled coverage in the news and social media, amplifying StopHDV's narrative of the redevelopment as 'social cleansing' (Figure 5.1). On placards, in chants and through their presence, together people publicly articulated the value of their homes, communities and workspaces – 'challenging and disrupting abstract representations commonly deployed in spatial policy discourse that marginalizes public housing residents as being both victims and causal agents of concentrated

and intergenerational poverty' (Thurber & Fraser 2016, 55). Addressing the crowd at a protest outside Haringey Civic Centre in February 2018, one Northumberland Park resident said:

> I love my community and I never want to move away from there. I want to live there and die with dignity. And I want everyone who is living in Northumberland Park to do so and I don't want nobody to bully me and say otherwise . . . where I live and how I live is up to me, I don't want nobody to push me. I don't want to be bullied from my home [cheers crowd out the speaker] I love it and I feel very safe there. I never ever want to move. So, whoever wants to fight with me come; I am here waiting for you! (Haringey Joint Community Campaigns 2018)

The first protest took place in late 2016 following a Momentum meeting. While those leading the meeting recommended responding to the HDV through a genteel letter-writing campaign to local councillors, others felt that concerted confrontational action was needed. As Simon Hester recalled, one attendee raised the idea and 'suddenly a demonstration was organised. Nobody had planned for that, but it was the obvious thing to do.' Many attendees agreed to gather outside a meeting of the council's Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel at the Haringey Civic Centre on 14 December.

Thereafter the demonstrations grew in size, benefitting from the involvement of experienced activists, but also bringing in many 'novice' participants. Protest veterans from the trade unions and leftist parties took a lead in organising the events, with Simon Hester acting as chief steward throughout. Stephanie Grant recalled seeing lots of people who hadn't been to the campaign meetings, but who cared enough to join in anyway. 'There was just so much energy, and so much involvement, and people being so positive, and people from all different groups – from the affected estates and other estates, but also people who just felt the whole process was wrong and joined in,' remembered campaigner Melissa Friedberg, who was moved by 'the level of people being really angry and upset about what was going on'.

This broader movement was built partly through the campaign's online activity. Social media accounts critiquing the HDV as a '£2 billion gamble' were set up in early 2017 (The Two Billion Pound Gamble 2017), followed in the spring by a StopHDV account and well-designed visuals. Doug Thorpe, who was involved in local housing activism, signed up for web courses run by Unite, which equipped him to create the campaign's website as well as running its Twitter account. With this support, StopHDV

made effective use of web and social media to challenge the secretive, complex plans for the HDV and share its counternarrative: 'the website was [crucial] in transmitting a lot of very specific information such as Freedom of Information requests, and also enabling us to update what was happening to a lot of observers and interested parties' (Phil Rose, campaigner).

Figure 5.1 Poster advertising a StopHDV demonstration, February 2018. Source: StopHDV campaign, reproduced with the permission of Gordon Peters.

While its social media reach was significant, StopHDV also engaged a much larger audience thanks to effective engagement with journalists. Media coverage helped to spread a critical account of the HDV within and beyond the borough, encouraging more people to join campaign activities. A group of campaigners worked persistently to draw journalists' attention to the controversy. Gordon Peters, Phil Jackson, Simon Hester and Doug Thorpe in particular contacted reporters and broadcasters to encourage them to cover the story, respond to published articles and offer interviews. They were well equipped with in-depth knowledge and documentation to evidence their claims, recalls *Guardian* journalist Aditya Chakrabortty.

Campaigners would comb through thousand-page council documents containing 'all of their dirty linen. That helped us get beyond an argument based on "we don't like this because it involves a private partner". We could show the detail of the plan, showing that Lendlease were specifically exempt from the council's right of return [to new homes for existing council tenants] for example,' said Paul Burnham. Facts were crafted into an effective counternarrative, skewering the elitism of the council leadership, with lively details about the cabinet's lavish trips to meet lobbyists and investors at Cannes published by local paper *The Ham & High*. Alongside *The Guardian*, the campaign achieved some sympathetic coverage in the *Financial Times* (Williams 2017). It also featured on international platforms interested in the role of global developer Lendlease, influential industry press such as *Inside Housing* and specialist publications read by decision-makers, including the *Local Government Chronicle*. This coverage heightened pressure on the Haringey leadership, although they received supportive write-ups from most of the liberal and right-wing press, which dubbed StopHDV a Momentum 'coup' (Proctor 2018).

Aditya Chakrabortty's *Guardian* articles were especially significant in promoting a counternarrative about the HDV:

> [The HDV] will demolish precious social housing, turf out families and rip apart communities. It will hand democratic control to a massive private entity. The 20-year plan is 'unprecedented', agreed backbench Councillors . . . it will form a blueprint for an altered capital. London will lurch closer towards becoming a playground for speculators, a dormitory for professionals, and off-limits both to the working class and to public dissent . . . If anything, this plan will add to the number who are homeless. Not by accident but by design: the plans are explicit about making accommodation in this London borough even more expensive . . . Kober and her circle have decided the way to fix Tottenham is to turn it into somewhere else. (Chakrabortty 2017a)

After the Grenfell Tower fire, Chakrabortty pointed out that proponents of the HDV were treating residents with a 'contempt' similar to that shown by leaders in west London. He commented on Haringey's promotional material for investors: 'Strangely, for an area in which around one in four residents is black, it features not a single black face.' And he urged readers to participate in a demonstration against the creation of the HDV that very evening: 'If you care about our capital remaining a home for all, rather than a chewtoy for international speculators, you should try to be there' (Chakrabortty 2017b).

On the evening of 3 July 2017, the council cabinet met to formally establish the HDV. Imelda O'Brien, herself a tenant of a local housing association, was there, having 'read Aditya Chakrabortty's article imploring people to join the demo'. She found it moving, standing in the middle of the common, not knowing anyone else involved, thinking, 'these people don't stand a chance, but we've got to do something about it'. Together they marched to the civic centre, noisily broadcasting their dissent. As councillors faced critical decisions inside, protesters outside chanted, banged pots and pans in the spirit of Latin American *cacerolazos*, hammered on the Town Hall's door and tried to force their way into the building. A motorbike cavalcade roared past and members of the London Winchevsky Chorus performed Yiddish workers' songs. For Imelda, the demonstration was a gateway to participating in the campaign more fully: she remembered being 'kind of hooked' from there, joining meetings of Northumberland Park Decides soon after.

StopHDV protests were a lively iteration of a well-established political tactic. The capacity to mobilise significant numbers drew on the pre-existing relationships, organisations and sense of place that characterise Haringey – including the area's 'integrative structures' (Bennett & Segerberg 2013) of trade unions, political parties and other community activist networks.

Demonstrations were accompanied by other cultural practices that offered people enjoyable and therapeutic ways to challenge dominant (mis)representations of Tottenham. In 2017, residents of north Tottenham were invited to help devise a community play, drawing on 'theatre of the oppressed' methodologies that critically explore social relations to realise emancipatory change. With a small council grant, Lynda Brennan, artistic director of the Tottenham Theatre, workshopped ideas for the play with residents. Several participants brought up the HDV: the prospect of people being displaced from the area was a focus of 'real outrage'. Lynda was struck by the fact that the whole troupe of around 25 people, from diverse backgrounds and of varying ages, was opposed to the HDV: 'That

was really striking. It was a very non-sectarian, grassroots movement . . . there was a considerable amount of unanimity against it.' Named *Up on the High Road*, the play explored who would have access to the new homes amid concerns about high prices and empty investment properties; one scene portrayed a heated public meeting in which people spoke about their housing needs and wants. It was a way of 'recreating the everyday reality that people were living', said Alison Davy, who took part:

> [The play] was about challenging the idea that there isn't really a community here, that it is just a load of anti-social people, people with ASBOs [legal 'anti-social behaviour orders'], people who are marginalised . . . and so there is no problem with knocking everything down because it is just full of criminals and marginalised people.

Up on the High Road defied narratives of classed and racialised stigma and negation (Figure 5.2). By presenting a diverse working-class perspective of Tottenham, it challenged the redevelopment: 'in many ways the play was about a kind of celebration of people's lives there [in Tottenham] but

Figure 5.2 Poster advertising the *Up on the High Road* community play, 2018. Source: Tottenham Community Theatre, reproduced with the permission of Lynda Brennan.

of course in the context of the HDV a lot of those people wouldn't have been living there'. Its anger and raucous humour were a 'great tonic to . . . the roller coaster of the campaign, which can be very dry and tedious sometimes', admitted Lynda Brennan.

Cultural activities and artistic practices have an ambivalent relationship with gentrification. As many anti-gentrification scholars and organisers have shown, 'art, artists, and art institutions are used both materially and ideologically to foster and protect gentrification'. Far from generating opportunities for working-class discovery, revitalisation and creativity, 'art-washing' engenders 'the displacement of long-term residents and the homogenizing of local culture for a culture of capital' (School of Echoes Los Angeles 2021, 94). Yet, despite being council-funded, the bottom-up and overtly political nature of the community theatre against the HDV was resistant to being subsumed in that way. *Up on the High Road* demonstrated the potential of creative and artistic practices to communicate, mobilise and politicise; it was theatre by, of and in solidarity with those who would have been most affected by the HDV.

The court case against the HDV

Further dramatic scenes came when campaigners took the council and Lendlease to court to challenge their plans. As many social and private tenants know all too well, the law is a crucial tool for eviction and dispossession. However, it can also be a means to tactically (if rarely substantively) contest such processes (Hubbard & Lees 2018).

In England, it is possible to formally challenge the *procedures* used by the state in coming to decisions if they are unlawful, but there is little scope to address the *content* of such decisions (Sendra & Fitzpatrick 2020). In strict legal terms, challenges often fail, and even when they succeed, the chances that development will be disrupted are slim. Reviewing six public inquiries secured by leaseholders into the compulsory purchase of their homes on London council estates slated for demolition between 2013 and 2019, Paul Watt (2021) notes that only one was successful (see Hubbard & Lees 2018, 8). Yet, while victories are rare, legal challenges can help to expose and politicise seemingly technical aspects of urban development: 'Property practices . . . can be disrupted', creating 'discursive space to bring gentrification arguments out into the open' (Layard 2018, 451).

In Haringey, place-based 'protest legacies' (Pasotti 2020) meant that opponents of the HDV already had a sense of where to turn for legal assistance. Plans for a legal challenge to the HDV were hatched early in

2017, after two concerned residents, Phil Jackson and Gordon Peters, connected over social media and contacted lawyers at Leigh Day, a firm with 'a reputation for being the scourge of the corporates and a fierce upholder of human rights' (Vidal 2015). The solicitors and the barrister who took on the case, Sarah Sackman, were familiar to some of the campaigners from previous cases, and the lead advocate, David Wolfe QC, had a strong record in cases analogous to StopHDV. Costs were partially met by crowdfunding, but much of the legal work was pro bono.

Although the ultimate ruling was not favourable to the campaign (see Box 5.1), the legal action had strategic value in several ways. By forcing the disclosure of official documents and justifications, the court case revealed evidence that fuelled counternarratives against the HDV. As solicitor Rowan Smith explained, the official documents released

> may have been publicly available in a basic sense but they were never really unearthed until the judicial review shone a light on them. Seen in context and having the full chronology from idea to policy, they gave the campaigners clear insight into what the council planned to do. They could have been accessed through FOI requests but the judicial review required the council to justify its position.

As such, the case exposed democratic deficits in the council's decision-making and pointed out potential conflicts between the venture's goals of generating profit and fulfilling the public interest. Court disclosures showed that the HDV was not primarily a social development, but rather 'financially led and any social benefit was regarded as a consequence of that – not as the primary purpose', said Gordon Peters. Indeed, cabinet minutes indicated that the first areas to be transferred to the HDV would be selected because they were 'potentially attractive to the market' as well as for purported 'socio-economic benefits'.

The case also highlighted the fact that the HDV could exacerbate intersecting geographical, socio-economic and racialised inequalities:

> Nowhere in the HDV plans is it set out how the supposed new jobs and 'affordable' new homes created will benefit the BAME[3] population . . . The Council has no overall control over the number of 'affordable' homes Lendlease builds [and the HDV] makes all housing targets conditional on [financial] 'viability' . . . Therefore, the way the HDV has been set up may directly make the inherent discrimination towards the BAME population within the Council's housing sector even worse. This matters, because the consequence

of the HDV will be to price out, not price in, already disenfranchised communities, as the nature of this type of HDV is that it will undertake activities for the greatest financial return, not necessarily for the greatest benefit of the BAME population. (Second witness statement of Mr Gordon Peters, 10 October 2017)

Box 5.1: Implications of the legal decisions in the judicial review

Lawyers presented several grounds for their challenge to the HDV, including that the council had failed to assess equality impacts on different social groups, had failed to consult the public properly and had failed to allow proper scrutiny and voting by the full council. However, in February 2018, the judge declared that the case had been brought too late: he found that the council had taken key steps back in 2015 and its decision had been 'materially made' in February 2017, so the judicial review was well outside the three-month limit on challenges.

On the substance of the arguments, the judgment was a more mixed picture (Bevan Brittan 2018): perhaps the council should have consulted earlier on its decision to set up a regeneration vehicle of this kind and assessed the impacts on equalities of the HDV's model compared to other options, but otherwise those impacts could be considered later, when specific sites were transferred to HDV control. Likewise, the full council could have a say on any financial implications on a site-by-site basis, and further legal challenges brought then.

But by that point, campaigners and their lawyers believed that halting or reversing the policy would be costly to the council and difficult – or impossible. Already by the time of the legal action, Haringey and Lendlease stated that they had spent almost £5.5 million on the HDV and warned that they and local residents would suffer 'substantial hardship' if an exemption was granted to the time limit for legal challenge. In his argument, Gordon Peters stated that, if the HDV went ahead, the council would be committed to quickly transferring its commercial portfolio and the civic centre to the HDV. Equalities analysis might also come too late for a meaningful policy rethink.

The implication of the ruling, according to the solicitor Rowan Smith, was that 'Councils can get away with consulting [communities on such plans] at a very top level'. Many of the details of the HDV agreement had only been made public one day before it was established in July 2017, but that was apparently too late for a challenge. However, the judgment carries limited weight as a precedent, as the case was deemed out of time and so there was no substantive judgment on which side would have won.

The legal action helped to magnify the campaign by offering a rallying point for publicity and fundraising, creating opportunities for wider politicisation. As Sarah Sackman explains, 'bringing a legal challenge can become a focus for mobilising people, empowering communities and attracting local – and even national – attention on the issues raised by social housing regeneration'. Public participation, such as attending court, 'can create community and solidarity' (Sackman 2020, 112).

The HDV's day in court was a dramatic occasion that stood out for several campaigners. It pitted one member of the community, the claimant Gordon Peters, against co-defendants Haringey and Lendlease, with all their institutional weight and legal firepower. Gordon recalled seeing his representative 'strikingly lined up against a large phalanx of corporate lawyers'. More than 100 people from Haringey travelled to the Royal Courts of Justice to protest and observe the case (Watt 2021). Alison Davy went with a group of people from Northumberland Park and remembered the day as a 'laugh a minute', demonstrating outside (Figure 5.3) before going inside to watch the proceedings. It was an opportunity to speak with the media, make their moral case and build the campaign's profile.

Crucially, the case bought the campaigners time for wider action to change the political composition of the council. The hearing took place at the Royal Courts of Justice in October 2017, but no judgment was reached until February 2018. During that period, no further steps could be taken to advance the HDV. Campaigners took advantage of this (unusually long) delay to pursue electoral tactics that would shift the political landscape decisively against the plans:

Figure 5.3 Protesters from Haringey outside the Royal Courts of Justice, 2017. Photo: Doug Thorpe.

> While the wider campaign over many months attracted much attention, it would not have succeeded without Gordon's challenge in the High Court. In the latter part of 2017, the prospect of a judicial review was the *only* thing that prevented the signing of binding, legal promises [between the council and developer], from which it would have been far more expensive to withdraw. The effect was to delay matters until political factors could be more fully engaged. Gordon's action was the *sine qua non* in halting the HDV. (Councillor Carter)

Indeed, legal action is best used tactically. In itself it will only ever address *procedural* issues (unless human rights are at play or public bodies are exceeding their powers), which can then be rectified by policy-makers, with the plans then going ahead. As Rowan Smith explained:

> The best judicial reviews are ones that stop 'X' decision or policy being made in the court, but in parallel the campaign manages to influence decision-makers, so if it comes back for a reconsideration they manage to change their mind politically. That, ultimately, is how you stop these redevelopment plans – politically. The courts may delay things but unless you change the decision-makers on the ground, then you ultimately won't win.

The campaign to stop the HDV was never going to be won 'solely in the courts' (Pasotti 2020, 18). But legal action prolonged the window for campaigning in other domains. 'A week before the judge came out with his judgment . . . it was getting so near the elections that Kober herself resigned because she could see that the weight of opinion was against her,' said Gordon Peters.

Electoral tactics and local Labour Party selections

While the council and developer were forced to suspend the HDV pending the legal judgment, the campaign was free to direct its energies towards upcoming local elections. In late 2017, the coalition mobilised to push candidates to oppose the HDV. The effort was largely coordinated by councillors concerned about the plans and the StopHDV coalition. Labour had a long-standing near-monopoly on local government in Haringey (winning 48 of Haringey's 57 council seats in the most recent elections). As a result, many of those in power were liable to see dissent through the

lens of intra-party politics, according to former councillor Dennis Dillon (Dillon & Fanning 2011). This was a misinterpretation. StopHDV did not seek to transform the political composition of the council: campaigners focused on a single issue, with candidates' opposition to the HDV the only condition for support. Among Labour's grassroots and national leadership, there *was* a shared critique of the HDV's approach to housing and municipal Labourism. But the campaign did not set out to overhaul the council.

By the time 2018 local elections were approaching, the campaign had gained the support of a significant share of existing Labour councillors. They worked in tandem with Liberal Democrats, hardly prone to enabling a 'hard left takeover'. Concerns over the HDV had also been raised by Haringey's MPs, both in the centre of the Labour Party (Box 5.2).

Box 5.2: Statement on the HDV by Tottenham's Labour MP, David Lammy, in February 2017

I am particularly concerned about the affordability of the new homes that the HDV will deliver; the bidding process and choice of a private partner; the employment practices of the preferred bidder Lend Lease [sic] and the need for more thorough consultation with Haringey residents.

I have serious concerns about the significant financial risks that a development of this scale involves, and the lack of oversight and scrutiny of the process so far – issues that were raised by the Haringey Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee last month.

I also want to make my position absolutely clear on current residents that will be affected by the HDV: the Council must guarantee that current residents will have the right to return to their homes on the same terms as they currently live following any redevelopment that takes place under the HDV. (Lammy 2017)

With local elections scheduled for May, campaigners initiated an intensive drive to ensure that as many candidates as possible opposed the HDV. Several critical councillors offered strategic advice. If attempts to convince an existing Labour councillor to oppose the HDV failed, then campaigners attempted to trigger a contest so that party members could opt to vote for an alternative candidate. As Phil Rose explained:

> That was a lot of work. It happened in five wards over four weeks. People decided on who they wanted to trigger and then went along to the meetings and handed out leaflets asking people to vote to trigger reselection. Then they leafletted for the candidate that they wanted to win. For the most part, the people who did this in the campaign were also Labour Party members.

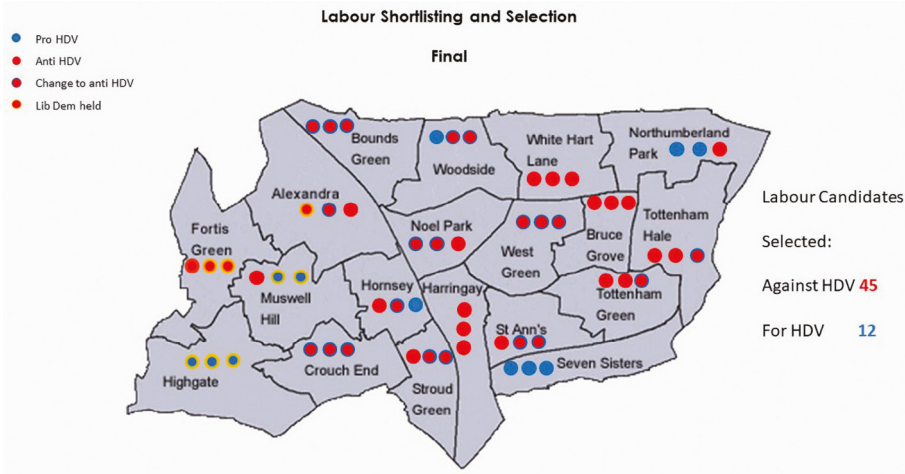


Figure 5.4 Map of candidates for council elections, by stance on the HDV, 4 November 2017. Red dots with blue outline show changes to anti-HDV candidates. Source: StopHDV website, reproduced with the permission of Gordon Peters.

Despite initial failures to unseat pro-HDV candidates, including council leader Kober, campaigners eventually gained the initiative thanks to the breadth of the coalition and the depth of community opposition to the HDV. 'They won all the rest of the seats by going door to door to turn people out and vote,' said Phil Rose. Labour Party membership had boomed during Corbyn's leadership, but without the encouragement of the StopHDV campaign new members might not have engaged with these seemingly arcane local processes. Face-to-face efforts to mobilise them helped to transform the scale of participation in Labour ward meetings – from a dozen or so in the past to more than a hundred turning up to vote for a candidate. Alongside the hard graft of knocking on doors, campaigners reached people online. Graphics tracked how the balance between councillors for and against was shifting (Figure 5.4). The public appetite for information on the HDV was great: during the reselection period, one campaign tweet got 82,000 views within hours, recalled Doug Thorpe. Local and national media further amplified the contest.

Of the 28 sitting Labour councillors in favour of the HDV at the start of this effort, a handful who remained publicly pro-HDV were reselected and 12 were deselected or chose to stand down. Among those replaced was the cabinet lead for housing, Alan Strickland. It was at this stage that

defeating the HDV seemed within reach. The new candidates, added to those who had opposed the HDV prior to the reselections, would return a majority against the HDV on election day.

In the run-up to the elections, the council leadership was determined to push the redevelopment through, providing the legal judgment went in their favour. That was prevented by cross-party opposition and an intervention from the national Labour Party. In January 2018, Liberal Democrat opposition councillors called for a full council vote on scrapping the HDV, confident of securing a majority if the Labour rebels came through. 'With high stakes and three cameras in the chamber, the atmosphere was electric,' recalled Liberal Democrat councillor Clive Carter. Fearful of being barred from standing for re-election if they defied the Haringey leadership, the Labour rebels sought support from the party's governing National Executive Committee. There, it was agreed that unless the future of the HDV could be resolved through mediation, the decision should be left to the post-election administration. Faced with imminent political defeat, Kober released a statement announcing that she would not be standing for re-election.

A few weeks after the May local elections, the new cabinet voted to scrap the HDV. According to the right-wing press, this was the culmination of a 'hard left' insurgency within Labour, backed by Corbyn's leadership (Zeffman 2018). Kober published a piece in the *Financial Times* lamenting the 'left's war on local government' (Kober 2018). Departing cabinet member Ali Demerci tweeted: 'You have to be really naive to believe this is not a purge by Momentum' (Proctor 2017).

But anti-HDV campaigners argued that efforts to replace councillors were a tactic of last resort, after the council leadership had secretively pursued the redevelopment plans for years and then doggedly refused to engage with widespread community concerns. Far from staging a coup in the council, the campaign offered to support any candidate who would oppose the HDV. The most active campaigners were generally sceptical that a different future for the borough could be achieved through electoral and party means. The battle over candidate selection was a pragmatic tactic, with cross-party support. Phil Rose reflected:

> A lot of people think the left won the council elections, but they didn't really. The middle ground of Labour councillors just shifted a bit left based on the HDV issue. It wasn't about the brilliance of left-wing ideas, it was just how bad the HDV was, and how badly it was managed by cabinet. The aim was never to get rid of Kober . . . The essence of the campaign was about building community, not just houses.

After the HDV

The HDV would have enclosed, commodified and extracted corporate and fiscal rents from public land with a potential value of billions of pounds. The newly elected council executive cancelled the HDV on 17 July 2018, confirming that collective grassroots power had successfully disrupted this totemic expression of the speculative city.

The defeat of the HDV seemed to presage a coming rupture in English politics. Haringey's new political leadership, quick to cancel the council's contract with Lendlease, was taken by many in the mainstream press to be a sign of the ascendency of Corbyn's left-leaning Labour Party, which in the previous year's national elections had unexpectedly achieved almost as large a share of votes as the governing Conservatives. Those who were unsympathetic to the StopHDV campaign's aims misrepresented the affair as an insurgent Momentum 'coup' (Proctor 2018), lamenting that a pragmatic, moderate and responsible leadership had been usurped by the Corbyn council. For those optimistic about the campaign's success, it looked as though at long last the politics of anti-austerity might be taking hold in a major London borough council.

However, the direction of travel, signalled early on by the newly elected (and since replaced) leader of the council Joe Ejiofor, was not towards great change. On the one hand, he stated that the new administration 'did not believe the HDV provides the answer to the challenges faced by the Council' and that they were 'taking decisive action to set a new direction' for the borough. On the other hand, he made it clear that his cabinet did 'not object to [the] outcomes anticipated by the HDV programme, nor . . . to the principle of partnerships with the private sector'. Indeed, he emphasised that 'the Council remained grateful to Lendlease for the interest that they had shown in Haringey and its future, and for their commitment to the Council in its other partnerships' (Haringey Council 2018). The problem with the HDV, he stated, was not the speculative and extractive nature of the model per se; it was its scale and the level of financial risk it posed to the council.

In the wake of the HDV, a transformative leftward turn in Haringey Council's political direction was never likely. The StopHDV campaign may have outmanoeuvred the local state, but it had not captured or assumed control over it; indeed, the local state's elected and professional officials were, with few exceptions, the same as before. With so much collective time and energy spent stopping the HDV, the campaign did not develop a clear programme or set of propositions for transforming urban governance, policy and practice in the borough. Nor, following the

local elections in 2018, did the campaign have much institutional power within the council or local authority bureaucracy to directly influence political culture, strategy, priorities or policy-making. As important as the deselection process proved in tipping the scales against Kober's administration, the StopHDV campaign had not managed to substantively alter the council's composition and gain meaningful representation for its politics. When the new administration cancelled the contract with Lendlease, it diffused the pressure that had formed against the council. The campaign's defensive focus and lack of propositional orientation also meant that those councillors who had been reselected promising to scrap the HDV felt no accountability to a wider programme of, or movement for, transformational change.

After the 2018 local elections, Haringey Council's elected chamber was marked more by continuity than change. Some campaigners felt that this continuity was reflected in the attitudes of council officers too. Whether because of ideological commitment, a lack of political direction or a dearth of imagination, the local authority did little to devise or progress policies in keeping with the spirit of the campaign. Worse, some felt that they continued to pursue gentrifying regeneration, albeit on a less sweeping scale. This latter perception has been fuelled by the ongoing role played in the borough by the same real estate actors responsible for the HDV, including Lendlease. Far from culminating in a decisive 'far-left' takeover, the HDV's end created a political vacuum in Haringey that was filled by factionalism, uncertainty and ambiguity.

Campaigners had ambivalent feelings about the new administration. Few felt that things had changed substantively for the better, but most pointed, at least tentatively, to signs that the council had been influenced by the struggle against the HDV and the depth of community feeling that the campaign had channelled for Tottenham as a diverse working-class place. Tempering the social violence and bureaucratic paternalism of large-scale demolition and dispossession, the council has shown modest signs of moving towards a 'cautious urban renewal' (Holm & Kuhn 2011). In step with wider shifts in London's urban politics, this is based on principles of preserving and gradually modernising existing buildings; upholding existing communities and avoiding displacement; and better engaging tenants and residents in decision-making. Progress on these principles, however, has been uneven – more evident in changed discourse than in policy and practice. Change is delimited by the political and economic dynamics of land, housing and statecraft in London, which continue to be defined by austerity and financialisation.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have explored how the StopHDV campaign disrupted the speculative city through a broad and flexibly deployed repertoire of resistance tactics. We have shown that the coalition's size and flexibility allowed campaigners to use a range of actions – from quiet and persistent interventions such as Freedom of Information requests and door-to-door canvassing, to noisy marches and demonstrations, as well as creative forms of community theatre and art.

We have highlighted four tactics that, in combination, defeated the HDV. First, the coalition allied and collaborated with critical councillors who could challenge the HDV through institutional channels. These councillors used their positions and worked alongside campaigners to gather evidence internally and from other local authorities, and to create moments of drama in the council chambers. They worked across party lines to resist the HDV. Second, the campaign mounted public demonstrations, creating exciting collective experiences which served to invigorate the campaign (directly and through social media and press coverage) as much as to pressure the council. Third, a legal challenge helped to politicise, publicise and, crucially, delay the venture. Finally, this gave campaigners time to organise within the Labour Party, encouraging party members to vote to select prospective council candidates who opposed the HDV and replace those who did not.

Many of these tactics have been deployed by other groups seeking to prevent estate demolition and speculative redevelopment – often without success. How, then, can we account for StopHDV's effectiveness? Undeniably, the campaign benefitted from a set of conducive, and historically and geographically specific, conditions. StopHDV was part of a wider wave of resistance to the speculative city that gathered pace from 2008, which manifested in different forms and across a range of scales. Among the most relevant were the upsurges in anti-austerity and housing activism across London, the Unite union's creation of 'community branches' in 2011 as an alternative to workplace-based membership and the left turn in the Labour Party from 2015. These 'infrastructures of solidarity' helped to inform and support StopHDV. They sustained vital 'solidarity work and alliance-building, the creation of (counter-)spaces on different scales, the production and sharing of (counter-)knowledge and the formation of social relations of solidarity and mutual care' (Schilliger 2020, 532). StopHDV was plugged into these infrastructures, but it also formed out of a deep pool of local organising – of established civic and solidarity networks with a range of liberal, progressive and radical

underpinnings. This is not to say that Haringey is exceptional. Other areas also have their own ecology of organisations and particular sense of local identity, which form unique place-based conditions for resistance.

Aside from these organisational foundations, the campaign's cause was helped by the scale of the HDV's proposed transformation and the obstinacy with which the council leadership sought to push it through. The borough-wide scale and implications of the plans created a huge potential constituency of opponents. Had the council adopted a more piecemeal approach to its agenda, it might have been able to 'divide and rule'. The council leadership was also unwilling to meaningfully and productively engage with dissenting perspectives from backbench councillors and the community. Confident of its right to rule, the executive made remarkably little effort to co-opt elements of the opposition and so split the coalition. This intransigence galvanised opponents, creating a common 'enemy', and gave them little choice but to defeat the HDV and its political proponents outright. They were able to do so in part because of good timing: the lengthy wait for the legal judgment and the scheduling of the local elections worked to their advantage.

But these opportunities could not have been grasped without the concerted, strategic and creative agency of local people and the broader coalition over the previous years, which generated a convincing counternarrative, built a substantial opposition movement and extended the window for action into the electoral period by placing a legal halt on the venture. The success of StopHDV depended on the campaigners' capacity to take opportunities that presented themselves, and to forge additional routes to victory. As Doug Thorpe put it:

> There was a real depth of work across many different fronts. At different times, different elements of the campaign proved to be important and worth the effort. The timing of the campaign and the deselections was 'luck', but the campaign created its own luck – the campaign put itself in a position to make the most of the luck it got.

Fundamental to this was building a broad coalition. That was achieved by established housing and planning activists, trade unionists, a small group of critical councillors and locally led solidarity networks. They were joined by a wider set of estate residents, local traders and concerned community members in an open coalition. Collectively, they had the capacity to contest the HDV on multiple fronts, through mutually reinforcing tactics.

The ability to build and sustain such a diverse, even unlikely, coalition reflected its defensive aim: people were united in urgent action to stop the HDV and did not have to engage in the difficult process of agreeing on an alternative. Strategic autonomy within the coalition was prioritised over consensus building. StopHDV's oppositional focus meant that the coalition could involve large numbers of people who were motivated by different political outlooks and commitments: among them left-wing council housing defenders, conservation-oriented activists and Liberal Democrat councillors (whose party had been a partner in the national austerity administration). Liberal critics were driven by concerns over the financial risk to the local authority and the uncertain delivery of new housing, while more radical activists were opposed to the loss of council homes and gentrification/social cleansing. But importantly, these cohered into a shared critique over the course of the campaign.

Yet the coalition never collectively articulated a propositional agenda. That is understandable, given the breadth and intensity of activities required to defeat the HDV. Single-issue campaign groups often lend themselves to confrontational politics, rather than seeking to build longer-term relationships with the local state (Dillon & Fanning 2011). Moreover, the oppositional focus reflected that the coalition wanted a more democratic approach to the future of the borough, determined on an ongoing basis by all those affected, rather than through a vehicle like StopHDV. There were, though, multiple positive demands and ideas within the coalition that pointed to possibilities beyond the speculative city. We discuss these in the next chapter.

Notes

1 Councillors questioning the HDV included Emine Ibrahim, who chaired the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel, and Stuart McNamara, who eventually resigned his cabinet post and joined Pat Berryman, Mark Blake, John Bevan and the Liberal Democrats – most actively Clive Carter, alongside Gail Engert, Bob Hare and Martin Newton – in opposing the HDV.

2 The Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel exists to examine the council's plans and come up with recommendations, which go to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee – made up of selected ward councillors who play an overarching role in holding the council's executive to account.

3 Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic.

6
Conclusion: beyond the speculative city?

> [The campaign] had an influence on changing the development agenda both locally and nationally. The right to place and the right to people wherever they live having a genuine decision in the nature of the development and the structures that would be built in that place, rather than by corporate speculative investment, I think has changed. (Gordon Peters, campaigner)

This chapter draws together the arguments of the book, reflects on the afterlives of the campaign and looks beyond the politics of disruption to alternatives to the speculative city. Connecting local ideas with international movements, we sketch out principles and approaches for sustaining diverse, democratic and post-extractive urban futures. This chapter integrates quotes from interviews conducted in 2020 and reflections from a further workshop in 2022.

We begin by revisiting the nature and origins of the speculative city, and the capacity of communities to disrupt this model of dispossessive urbanism. StopHDV is an inspiring case of resistance: a grassroots coalition of diverse working-class communities defended their homes, social infrastructures and livelihoods against the powerful interests mobilised to remake Tottenham. For readers interested in the tactics deployed – within the council, in the streets, in the courts and in local elections – we offer a summary in the Appendix.

The importance of the campaign extends beyond community self-defence. Later in this chapter we discuss how grassroots pressure from urban campaigns and movements across London is tempering the speculative city. This is evident in a more cautious approach to urban development that is gaining traction – albeit unevenly and imperfectly – in governing and policy-making circles. After StopHDV, the local

state has been less eager to create large-scale speculative ventures with real estate developers involving the comprehensive demolition of council homes and the development of unaffordable housing. However, progress has been modest and, under a national regime of austerity, local governments often rely on cross-subsidy from private development and the commodification of public land. Greater action is needed to improve existing social housing, including its energy efficiency, and to provide additional council homes with genuinely affordable rents and secure tenure. Democratic engagement needs to go beyond carefully orchestrated ballots of estate residents facing redevelopment, to properly informed consent, participatory planning and budgeting, co-design and forms of common ownership that protect against privatisation. Local government reform should also empower all councillors to play a meaningful role in the development of plans and policy, alongside those they represent. These forms of democratisation would help to ensure that urban development respects and builds on existing, diverse socio-economic infrastructures – for example, through participatory mapping of livelihoods and community support – rather than writing them off as non-existent, dysfunctional or 'anti-social'.

To conclude the chapter, we sketch out alternatives to the speculative city and reflect on how to move towards more socially and ecologically just urban futures. The ideas and actions that we outline come from the propositions of StopHDV and other mobilisations across London and beyond. We take inspiration from anti-extractivist movements in Latin America, where Indigenous communities and other groups have pushed for ecologically and socially just alternatives to the exploitation of natural resources to cross-subsidise social spending. We also draw on feminist action and research around 'diverse economies' that recognise, value and promote the breadth of practices that sustain us. Finally, we engage with 'new municipalist' experiments remaking local government's relationship with communities and social movements, against and beyond the logics of the local real estate state.

Summary of key arguments

At the heart of this book is the story of the 'battle for Haringey' and the conflicting visions for the city that were at stake in the aftermath of the 2011 uprising. Backed by real estate interests and Conservative politicians in regional and national office, leaders in local government convened a revanchist neo-colonial vision for Tottenham (Gilroy 2013; Tyler 2013).

They presented the unrest as the work of a racialised and anti-social underclass, a product of 'failed' council estates and low-cost housing, whose transience and economic precarity were read as expressions of a dysfunctional urban citizenship holding back property-led growth and who were therefore no longer worthy of a place in the city. Capitalising on the 'riots', the official plan was to demolish and remake diverse working-class areas of the borough, especially in Tottenham, in the image and interests of a wealthier class of investor and resident.

The method was a joint venture of unprecedented scale and scope between Haringey Council and the controversial global property developer Lendlease. The Haringey Development Vehicle (HDV) would have taken control of a substantial share of the council's assets, including thousands of council homes, its entire commercial portfolio and key civic buildings. Blending public land with private finance, the intention – as was clear from official documents – was to replace lower-cost homes and affordable workspaces with residential and commercial real estate designed to cater to wealthier and whiter populations.

But a grassroots coalition of tenants, traders, trade unionists, councillors and campaigners in the borough stood up to this 'social cleansing' (Watt 2018). They opposed the stigmatisation of their homes, the disruption of their livelihoods and the ceding of democratic assets and power to a joint venture with a global corporation. Building on existing solidarity networks and housing activism, they formed a powerful campaign to StopHDV and derailed this '£2 billion gamble' in property markets, which would have had profound consequences for housing provision, affordable workspaces and public finances.

Contrary to widespread claims that StopHDV was an intra-Labour struggle led by the Momentum group, the campaign was a diverse movement containing radical, progressive and centrist currents. Established local organisations and London-wide anti-austerity and housing movements played an important part, alongside Liberal Democrat councillors and newly politicised residents. Thanks to its size and openness, the coalition was able to take and make multiple opportunities to challenge the HDV, appropriating public and official spaces alike (Miraftab 2004). In the streets, within the council, at court and around local elections, the coalition mounted an institutionally insurgent campaign. By building and demonstrating substantial opposition to the plans, StopHDV left local leaders with little choice but to back down. It is a rare and important victory.

In broader terms, the HDV was a totemic case of a global trend towards the 'speculative city', in which state institutions prioritise the

inflation of land values as a source of funding and a tool of governing (Chu & He 2022; Goldman 2011). With real estate investment taking an increasingly dominant role in many economies since the 1980s, states have sought to ride property booms by monetising their land holdings, as well as extracting a share of rising values in the private market through taxation (Christophers 2018). Those efforts intensified in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis. Fuelled by low interest rates and other supportive policies, real estate evaded the economic slump: landowners and investors enjoyed rapid growth in asset prices and associated profits. At the same time, local government in the UK was subject to deep funding cuts under a national austerity regime. Also significant was the decision by central government to replace redistributive grants with a more localised system of financing for councils (Hastings et al. 2017). In that context, local authorities were pushed increasingly towards treating their land as a financial asset and partnering with private capital in search of revenue-generating urban development (Penny 2022). But it is a choice: the speculative city has been unevenly pursued by local government (Pike 2023).

Advocates of the speculative city claim that this is a progressive approach, enabling the state to turn property markets to its advantage, generating much-needed revenue while creating new homes and economic growth. However, as the case of the HDV shows, the speculative city is premised on the dispossession of public land and diverse working-class places, as their homes and other socio-economic infrastructures are denigrated and demolished (Horton & Penny 2023). Deliberately ratcheting up land values also deepens housing, welfare and workspace crises. These interlinked processes of dispossession and domicide have unequal effects along intersecting vectors of social differentiation, including race and class (Lowe 1996; Ndu 2022).

Fundamentally, the speculative city is an extractive and unsustainable model of urban development. Officials in London have likened urban land values to 'North Sea Oil' (Hatherley 2020). This is a telling metaphor: a territorial resource to exhaust for financial gain, no matter the social and environmental cost. Monetising these resources changes the environment in ways that make it harder for most of us to survive, whether through the climate disruption of carbon-intensive redevelopment or as soaring land values create unaffordable, exclusive and under-occupied spaces (Atkinson 2019). It also deepens inequalities, as revenues accrue mostly to the owners of assets and states struggle to secure public benefits when bargaining with powerful developers (Ferm & Raco 2020). Compared to more diverse economies, a heavy dependence on resource revenues

for growth and state funding makes development and public provision vulnerable to market volatility and crisis (cf. Goldman 2011; Riofrancos 2020). Where a single sector becomes economically dominant, others suffer from a lack of investment and political attention (Christensen et al. 2016). Extractive economies are not only short-termist: they tend to reinforce inequality and injustice.

Where the local state has most enthusiastically embraced property-led redevelopment, it has been as a means of pursuing broader governing objectives – beyond an attempted fiscal fix for austerity. The speculative city has offered political opportunities to demolish stigmatised places, dispersing impoverished, racialised and potentially 'riotous' populations who are deemed too costly and criminal to legitimately claim space in the city (Bledsoe & Wright 2019). In effect, the financialised 'real estate state' (Stein 2019) transforms the composition of the city, expelling diverse working-class inhabitants in favour of whiter, wealthier classes. Anti-colonial scholarship and activism provide important tools for analysing and contesting these processes (Addie & Fraser 2019; Kipfer 2022; Danewid 2023). As we discuss later in this chapter, the speculative city can be disrupted and alternatives can be built in the hope of a more democratic urban political economy.

The speculative city after the Haringey Development Vehicle

The defeat of the HDV did not spell the end of the speculative city in London. Whilst the StopHDV campaign disrupted the plans of Haringey Council and Lendlease, it was not able to capture the local state or shift urban development in a fundamental sense. The extractive and dispossessive urban political economic conditions remain, for the most part, in place.

But this does not mean that the StopHDV campaign and other urban social movements have not been shaping urban politics in London. Tempering the social violence and bureaucratic paternalism of large-scale demolition and dispossession, some councils in London, among them Haringey, have shown modest signs of moving towards a more 'cautious urban renewal' (Holm & Kuhn 2011). This is based on principles of preserving and gradually modernising existing buildings, upholding existing communities and avoiding displacement, and better engaging tenants and residents in decision-making.

Such principles sit uneasily with, and are delimited by, the political and economic dynamics of land, housing and statecraft in London. Progress since the late 2010s has been uneven and is more evident in changed discourse than in policy and practice. But even this cautious and limited progress points to the important afterlives of community organising and the possibility of more socially and ecologically just urban futures.

A 'renaissance' in council and social housing?

One of the clearest steps towards a more 'cautious urban renewal' in London has been the commitment in principle to increasing the stock of council and social housing. Across London – led by Mayor Sadiq Khan – politicians and policy-makers have increasingly recognised, at least rhetorically, the importance of this tenure to the health and wealth of the capital. Furthermore, these sentiments have been backed up by some concrete action and funding. After a decades-long consensus in favour of the de-municipalisation of housing (Hodkinson 2019), London councils have started to develop and acquire housing stock once again.

In public advertisements displayed prominently across the city in 2023, the Mayor of London celebrated the success of his 'Building Council Homes for Londoners' funding programme in catalysing a 'council housing renaissance', claiming that more council homes have been started in London since 2018 than in any period since the 1970s. These efforts have been supported in part by changes at the national level in favour of social housing, including the 2017 Affordable Homes Programme's increased (but still far from sufficient) support for social rent and the 2018 decision to lift a cap on how much local authorities can borrow to build homes (Judge & Tomlinson 2018).

In Haringey, in contrast to the HDV's denigration of council housing as an anti-social infrastructure, the new administration has committed to delivering new council housing in the borough. For campaigner Gordon Peters, this shows that StopHDV helped to break 'the spell of local authority collusion with speculative and commodified housing' in the borough. The HDV had not planned for any additional social housing and it could have entailed a net loss. Since abandoning the HDV, the council has set up its own wholly owned housing company, Haringey Homes, which it claims is 'delivering the first new council homes in a generation, with as many as possible built on existing council-owned land' (Haringey Council 2023a). Tenants are generally offered a more clearly stated right to return after regeneration (as at Tottenham's Broadwater Farm and Love Lane estates).

The council has also stepped back from actively promoting 'affordable' housing, which can charge up to 80 per cent of market rents and includes shared ownership schemes. That is in part due to the work of Defend Council Housing in showing how these tenures reproduce racial inequalities. Instead, 'There is a 100% social rent policy on [the affordable portion of] new council developments . . . and that is miles ahead of other boroughs,' noted DCH secretary Paul Burnham. These shifts in attitudes towards council and social housing represent the real achievements of London's tenant and housing movements, including StopHDV.

However, this 'renaissance' in council and social house building does not break from, and is in fact underpinned by, London's speculative and extractive model of real estate development. As campaigner Lynda Brennan put it, the housing and development situation in Haringey and across London is an 'ongoing fight'. In the absence of sufficient grant funding, most investment in new social housing is cross-subsidised by, and thus contingent on, the sale of public land and the successful realisation of market and intermediate housing (Beswick & Penny 2018; Penny 2022). As a result, London's ability to meet its most critical housing need is vulnerable to inflation in financing, material and labour costs, as well as the so-called 'health' of private house sales. This explains in part why rents for new council and social homes are consistently higher than average council housing rents across the capital. Ultimately, the amount of social housing being built by councils is far below that which is needed. London also remains overwhelmingly reliant on private sector developers, which councils argue speed up the delivery of affordable homes. Although project-by-project agreements between councils and developers are not comparable in scale to mega joint ventures like the HDV, they still privatise public land in exchange for limited social benefits.[1]

New building also entails opportunity costs and environmental implications. When financed by borrowing against a council's Housing Revenue Account, developments can reduce funds available for the maintenance and improvement of existing homes, including longer-term climate adaptation. In addition, there are growing concerns that much new development is not compliant with net zero carbon emissions commitments. Franklin Thomas, who lives in Northumberland Park, felt that the local authority is still playing the 'same game' of real estate-led redevelopment.

A new wariness of estate demolitions

The campaign helped create more 'wariness of estate demolitions' within Haringey Council, to quote Paul Burnham. Since rejecting the HDV, the council has committed to investing in improving housing estates. And across London a 'refurbish and retrofit-first' agenda, pushed by tenant organising and networks such as Refurbish Don't Demolish, is slowly gaining strength amid a growing recognition of the built environment's role in contributing to the climate emergency.

However, demolitions have not stopped. The financial and tax incentives for comprehensive development to release latent land values and rent gaps in the absence of grant funding remain strong. In London, between 2003 and 2021, 'demolition schemes on sites with existing social housing . . . led to the net loss of 6,748 social and council homes', with that loss set to double under further demolitions approved by 2021 (Berry 2021). Over 100 council and housing association estates were at risk of demolition and comprehensive redevelopment in 2020, spread across almost every borough in the city (Estate Watch 2020).

In Haringey, councillors defended schemes entailing the comprehensive redevelopment of council housing on the basis of safety concerns and the prohibitive cost of breaking contracts signed under Kober's administration.[2] Controversially, on Lendlease's High Road West scheme near the Tottenham Hotspur stadium, plans include the demolition of the Peacock Industrial Estate and Love Lane council estate. Critics of this scheme suggest that it represents one of 'various reincarnations' of the HDV which are proceeding on a piecemeal basis – with the effect of avoiding large-scale opposition whilst nevertheless eroding public land and social homes. Some councillors attempted to halt this scheme. However, according to Paul Burnham, council officers and the Greater London Authority (GLA) were committed to the project, with the latter threatening to withdraw £90 million of funding for 'affordable housing' from the borough if the scheme was abandoned. Campaigners reflected that the council might have been compelled to break its contract with Lendlease had there been stronger local opposition.

A more collaborative local state

Besides a renewed interest in council housing and a more cautious attitude towards estate demolitions, there has been some reorientation of the relationship between the council and communities. StopHDV has helped to pressure Haringey Council into a more collaborative and participatory approach to urban development and regeneration in the

borough. Under the previous administration, recalled campaigner Hilary Adams, 'the council had a particular agenda and there was absolutely no chance of making them change it'. After the HDV, this top-down obstinacy softened: 'Co-production and co-design is now more integral to council strategy, which I believe is a positive outcome of the Stop HDV campaign,' commented a councillor.

Rather than representing a profound change in political culture, this recognition of the need for more and better community involvement is partly the product of the campaign's success in changing the risk calculus for the local state and developers. The campaign made it clear that the active involvement and enthusiastic support of the council leadership is no guarantee that a scheme will come to fruition. Indeed, the case of the HDV has been widely cited as a cautionary tale in the housing development industry press. In 2019, *Inside Housing* referred to 'the continued shadow cast by the Haringey Development Vehicle saga over large-scale strategic regeneration joint venture vehicles' (Harris 2019). Multiple London councils – including Camden, Croydon and Newham – have stepped back from HDV-style ventures since 2018.

Further evidence of the growing, if uneven and imperfect, trend towards participatory forms of decision-making can be found in the institution of tenant votes on estate demolition and redevelopment across London in 2018. When Jeremy Corbyn called for such ballots in his speech to the Labour Party Conference in 2017, the idea was dismissed by Haringey Council (Kentish 2018). A year later, after the defeat of the HDV, estate ballots became national Labour policy and, under London Mayor Sadiq Khan, a requirement for schemes receiving GLA funding. London Assembly member Sian Berry of the Green Party noted, 'This new policy represented a significant victory for a long campaign . . . a real step forward in recognising Londoners' right to shape the future of their homes and communities' (Berry 2022, 2).

However, concerns remain about power imbalances between councils and tenants or residents, as well as the capacity of tenants and residents to meaningfully influence development. In ballots, councils often present tenants and residents with a binary choice between redevelopment or managed decline which forecloses a broader discussion of alternatives. Housing campaigners have also pointed out that councils spend large sums on efforts to promote a 'yes' vote through events such as 'fun days', rather than engaging residents in a rounded evaluation to ensure proper informed consent. Almost every ballot to date has succeeded in securing the council's preferred outcome. Votes in Haringey have not avoided such controversies. Berry's review of the policy found

that, 'too often, residents' voices are minimised or erased when they are critical of redevelopment options and processes, and . . . residents who voice discontent and critique have difficulties in raising their objections' (Berry 2022, 2).

Since StopHDV, the critique of the speculative city has strengthened, and elements of the local state are paying greater attention to actions that can help tame it. But so long as the underlying political economy remains broadly intact, genuine progress towards more socially, ecologically and democratically just urban development is likely to be muted.

Beyond the speculative city

While the campaign against the HDV was primarily oppositional in nature, it also expressed a set of propositions for alternatives and how to build towards them. These reflected several principles uniting the diverse coalition. Central was a passionate defence of Tottenham as a place, including its communities and socio-economic infrastructures. The social violence and ecological waste caused by demolition and redevelopment were repudiated. And the campaign also expressed critical perspectives on the operation of power, including: scepticism of the council's competencies, especially in holding a powerful global developer like Lendlease to account; a commitment to the importance of genuine citizen participation in democratic processes; and a belief in the necessity of stronger collective stewardship over the governance of urban land, development and housing markets, including through collectively owning, managing and directly delivering public assets, goods and services. Taken together, these positions formed the basis of a situated and systemic critique of the local real estate state and the speculative city.

In this section we identify how these principles connect with and speak to other movements and approaches locally and internationally. We highlight three areas of dialogue that extend the politics of StopHDV beyond the speculative city. Given our analysis of the speculative city as an extractive regime premised on the unsustainable exploitation of land as a territorial resource, we look to anti-extractivist mobilisations (Riofrancos 2020). Some of the most influential have emerged in Latin America amid booming demand for primary resources such as oil and rare minerals. Here leftist governments have sought to redistribute a share of resource revenues to fund social objectives. But, led by Indigenous peoples' experiences of extractivist violence and counter-knowledges in the Andes, Amazon and beyond (Acosta & Abarca 2018),

social movements have challenged this 'redistribution without structural change' (Ponce & Vos 2012), aiming instead for a post-extractivist transition. Many of their principles resonate with the 'diverse economies' approach to research and community action (Gibson-Graham 1996). Refuting conventional economic analysis and aims, this work recognises and seeks to nurture and protect crucial forms of material provisioning, social support and care, which are marginalised (if not actively disrupted) by the speculative city. To this, we add inspiration from 'new municipalist' thought and practice (Russell 2019) about the ways in which urban social movements can interact with the local state to secure alternatives to the speculative city.

Repairing urban environments

Addressing the environmental damage of urban development and associated injustices is foundational to alternatives to the speculative city. For StopHDV, a central demand was for existing homes to be properly maintained and refurbished, to avoid 'the human and environmental spoliation which accompanies demolition' (Gordon Peters). These concerns built on another local effort that, since 2008, has challenged the demolition and speculative redevelopment of Wards Corner indoor market, a place of particular importance to London's Latin American community. Noting that the 'construction and use of buildings currently accounts for around half of the carbon emissions in Haringey', an alternative community plan developed by Latinx traders and the wider community stated: 'We regard restoration as a more sustainable form of regeneration, building as it does on already existing community assets. Top-down, developer-led regeneration is not the only way.' The plan set out to 'create an exemplar model of sustainable development' through environmentally friendly retrofitting, 'bringing the building up to the highest energy efficiency standards and employing innovative energy saving and recycling technologies' (Stevenson et al. 2013, 4, 54, 74, 120).

Such calls are now prominent among housing movements in the face of the intensifying climate emergency and fuel poverty crisis. For example, in 2021 the Radical Housing Network called for an emphasis on retrofitting buildings to improve energy efficiency and on repurposing vacant properties, as well as for new construction to be carbon neutral (Radical Housing Network 2021). In *The alternative good practice guide to estate regeneration*, the group Estate Watch called on the Mayor of London to stop all funding for council and social estate demolitions, insisted that demolition should be 'an absolute last resort' and demanded

a significant increase to the inadequate current allocation (of £160 million) for retrofitting social housing (Estate Watch 2023). New tenant-led networks, such as Refurbish Don't Demolish, have also formed in recent years to share experiences, advice and solidarity.

In rethinking urban environments from an ecological perspective, StopHDV and other London movements have drawn on post-extractivist mobilisations internationally. For example, Gordon Peters cited 'indigenous struggles in Latin America particularly against mining, deforestation and land grabbing' as inspiration. In place of the logics of extraction, marketisation and cross-subsidy, these movements have prioritised socio-ecological balance and '"the reproduction of life" – including nonhuman nature – "not of capital"' (Riofrancos 2020, 177). Turning away from economic growth as the governing aim, this philosophy is sometimes expressed as the 'search for living well' in community (*sumak kawsay* in Quechua or *buen vivir* in Spanish) (Acosta & Abarca 2018). Practical demands have included deprivatising water and other natural resources, reforming land ownership and paying reparations for climate damage. Although commitments to environmental justice and repair were not extensively developed by StopHDV, they have become increasingly prominent in research and activism in the years since (Corwin & Gidwani 2021). Two other key principles received more focus from StopHDV and have been areas of experimentation and innovation in the borough, as we now set out.

Valuing diverse socio-economic infrastructures

Beyond the speculative city, the StopHDV campaign insisted on valuing existing places – the homes, relationships, practices and spaces that support distinctive urban worlds. It challenged the deprecation of council housing, small industrial estates, shops and markets run by and largely serving working-class migrant communities. As opponents of the HDV recognised, these form essential socio-economic infrastructures, meeting material needs (albeit in complex and precarious ways) as well as supporting social relationships (Hall 2015; Hasenberger & Nogueira 2022; Horton & Penny 2023). Although devalued by dominant urban discourses, 'community-based economies, created by Black people who encounter stigmatization, are essential to their survival' (Hossein 2017, 2).

By valuing these relations, post-speculative city mobilisations echo 'diverse economies' work that rethinks the definition and aims of economic activity. They reject the exclusionary focus of conventional economic policy and analysis on a narrow set of market-based activities.

Growing those activities, especially in more profitable sectors and those favoured by productivity metrics, has become the overriding aim of policy since the creation of national accounting techniques, especially in the era of neoliberalism. Dominant urban 'strategies and plans are rooted in the economic logics of centrality, focusing on a small sub-set of economic activities (e.g. international financial services, real estate and construction, and creative or high-tech industries) in an attempt to compete in the global economy' (Taylor 2021). Other aspects of economies – such as state provision or unpaid care – may be counted in GDP, but in governing discourses they generally figure as a cost or burden on the so-called 'productive' economy. It was this logic that underpinned the HDV's vision for a greater presence of large corporate chains in Tottenham and other parts of the borough, ignoring the fact that many of the anticipated jobs in hospitality and retail would have been low paid and insecure. As Myfanwy Taylor notes, narrowly prioritising external capital and certain favoured sectors 'produces poverty, inequality and displacement by ignoring, marginalizing and excluding those economic activities that [already] secure the majority of urban lives and livelihoods' (Taylor 2021).

In contrast, we can think about economies in an expansive way as '*all* the things we do to ensure the material functioning and well-being of our households, communities, and nations' (Gibson-Graham et al. 2013, 4). This perspective radically decentres the kinds of economic activities prized within the speculative city as only the tip of the iceberg, which is kept afloat by an extensive range of other relations, institutions, forms of work and everyday support (Figure 6.1). The iceberg aims to represent activities that are performed and relied upon disproportionately by marginalised groups. By recognising the scale and importance of diverse economic practices, communities and institutions can seek to preserve and expand them. Diversity, from this perspective, has an inherent value, but also, inspired by ecological thinking, is recognised as reducing the exposure of communities and places to the risks of depending heavily on a single form of economic activity – such as speculative property development (Duranton & Puga 2000). Instead of being a drain on 'higher-value' sectors, diverse economic activities meet needs directly, generating plural forms of value, including financial and social surpluses that circulate within the wider economy. Without these activities, costs and negative consequences accrue to the state and other sectors.

Diversity is also essential to post-extractivist visions. In Latin American contexts, this has meant recognising the collective rights of Indigenous peoples alongside the claims of the post-colonial

Figure 6.1 Representing diverse economies: conventional definitions of the economy only capture the 'tip of the iceberg', ignoring a much more extensive set of practices that keep it afloat and sustain life.
Source: Community Economies Collective, 2023, licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

state. In cities like London, respecting the diversity of multiple and overlapping communities is important for countering the post-imperial racialised hierarchies that underpin the speculative city. In place of the homogenising and exclusionary development envisioned through the HDV (Horton 2021; Waldron 2018), it is crucial to recognise, value and build on the strengths of existing communities and places, rather than treating them as *terra nullius* – blank, empty space for corporate development (Taylor 2021).

An example of this approach in practice is the collaboration between researchers and traders at the Seven Sisters market in Tottenham, in the Wards Corner building. Together they have documented how the transactions and interactions there created 'a space of economic flourishing and a space of refuge, rich with resources, connections and therapeutic benefits' (Taylor 2020, 8). They are part of a highly diverse web of activities and global connections along Tottenham High Road, as mapped out in earlier research (Clossick 2014). There remains a need for deeper 'detailed local economy studies [to] provide a starting point for incremental and collaborative work with traders, small businesses and the wider community to further develop existing strengths and address needs and desires in the locality' (Taylor 2021). As we discuss below, traders and local supporters – including some who were involved in StopHDV – have been developing a proposal for community ownership of the site.

Democratising local power

Moving beyond the speculative city involves a radical reworking of relations between citizens, the state and private developers. In Haringey, the council leadership asserted that the HDV could simultaneously serve the public interest and the objectives of an international real estate firm: the power- and profit-sharing arrangement would, it claimed, give both partners an equal say in redevelopment, with the community consulted along the way. However, precedents elsewhere confirmed the power of private developers to renegotiate schemes in their favour, while the quality of early consultations on the HDV inspired little confidence that a democratic approach would be pursued, sensitive to those whose homes and workspaces were up for demolition.

Campaigners advocated for more direct public provision of homes and services, but, mindful of the pressures of neoliberal national government and private capital, they also prioritised genuine participation in democratic processes and stronger collective stewardship. Their

defence of genuinely democratic local government did not mean that the campaign simply sought to increase local state power and control. The campaign was highly critical and suspicious of Haringey Council and its tendency to bureaucratic paternalism and social violence. Instead, the campaign's anti-austerity elements evinced a 'new municipalist' impulse to reimagine, reposition and repurpose the local state in relation to urban society – including urban social movements, grassroots campaigns and tenants' and community organisations – in a way that would more deeply democratise local state institutions whilst also expanding the space for collective self-governance. New municipalist thinking and experiments have emerged internationally, often in contexts where the local state enjoys more autonomy than is the case in the UK, but nevertheless they have inspired innovation and activism here (Bianchi 2023; Thompson 2021). Indeed, rather than giving up on or giving in to the local state, the StopHDV campaign and its afterlives suggest ways of relating to the state as a contradictory social formation that, for all its limitations and pathologies, may be put to use by pressure from below and within for projects that dismantle and erode the speculative city (Beveridge & Koch 2022).

Post-extractivist movements have also organised to share power between the state and communities, challenging the state's monopoly on sovereignty and the simple 'unity of state, nation, territory, and resources' (Riofrancos 2020, 6). This is not about 'minimising the state but understanding its limits and rethinking its role from the perspective of the community' (Acosta & Abarca 2018, 137). The state is viewed 'not [as] a monolithic entity, but rather [as] a variegated terrain shot through with internal disputes, asymmetric power relations, and a range of institutional spaces that are more or less open to activist pressure (or, conversely, to alliances with economic elites)' (Riofrancos 2020, 173–4). Accordingly, across Latin America, social movements have sought to share authority with the state, in a dialectic between the 'Left-in-government' and the 'Left-in-resistance'. This can involve practices such as participatory planning and budgeting (Cabannes & Lipietz 2015). Through continuous mobilisation and efforts to avoid being co-opted, urban social movements have pushed governments to fulfil and exceed their promises (de Sousa Santos 1998), even as maintaining these relations has proven difficult (Melgar 2014). Pushing for the sharing of power expands politics beyond the limited, legalistic right to consent to extraction, just as communities in London have demanded a more meaningful say than procedural yes/no ballots on estate demolition.

Some evidence of a shift towards diffusing power beyond the real estate state can be found in the campaign to save the Wards Corner indoor market at Seven Sisters in south Tottenham. An approximate microcosm of the HDV, from 2008 to 2021 the Wards Corner market was under threat from a property-led proposal for redevelopment that would have displaced the mostly Latin American traders for 190 rental flats, with no 'affordable housing'. Facing a partnership between the public landowner, Transport for London, and private developer Grainger plc, a diverse working-class campaign led by Latin American traders and residents fought to protect people's livelihoods, communities and social space (Taylor 2020). In August 2021, Grainger formally abandoned its plans to demolish and redevelop the market, citing rising costs and, notably, the strength of local opposition. Whilst the council was not responsible for leading on this redevelopment, it was the planning authority and so had the capacity to influence the nature and quality of the proposed plans. Yet through most of the Save Latin Village campaign, Haringey Council was uninterested in, unsupportive of and at times even hostile to the traders and their attempts to develop their own alternative community plan. Indeed, in ways that recall the stigmatisation of diverse working-class communities that characterised the HDV, campaigners reported contempt and racism from those who were elected to represent their interests.

After the HDV, and following Grainger's decision to end its interest in the area, the Save Latin Village campaigners looked forward to the possibility of a qualitatively new relationship with the council. Writing in 2022, they said:

> We welcome Haringey Council's decision to terminate their development agreement with Grainger. After nearly two decades of struggle, market traders, local residents and local businesses are finally beginning to have their voices heard . . . The Trust welcomes the Council's decision to progress *an alternative council-led approach* to the Wards Corner site, working in partnership with local residents, businesses and community groups. We welcome in particular the commitment to *a slower and nuanced approach to enable collaboration and co-design with the community*. We are also pleased to see a strong emphasis on delivering council housing. (Huxley 2022, emphasis added)

There is hope that the local state can be pressured and cajoled into helping to nurture and grow experiments for collective self-governance, management and provisioning – over time eroding the speculative city.

One such approach is the 'public-commons partnership', developed by traders, campaigners and academics around the Wards Corner indoor market. Together, they have worked up an alternative to the 'public-private partnerships' that were promoted globally as a tenet of good governance in the 1990s and 2000s to bring private finance to public infrastructure and services, including for hospital building and estate regeneration in the UK (Raco 2013; Hodkinson 2019). These partnerships proved far more expensive than direct public financing, underpinning extractive gains for private companies while undermining democratic control and capacity. By contrast, the aim of a partnership between the 'public' and 'commons' is to combine the electoral legitimacy and resources of the state with an extended form of democratic ownership and management involving ongoing, carefully organised participation by members of the community (Russell et al. 2022). It blends co-ownership and co-governance across a public body, such as a local authority, and a Common Association that manages property with 'the active participation of a representative body of local residents and workers, a registered charity in the form of a development trust, and public sector officials'. The public-commons partnership, then, is:

> a model for envisioning a different kind of development: one that encourages investment to improve conditions for local people, in which allocation of resources is determined democratically to best meet the needs of those who maintain an area's social infrastructure, and which is rooted in the empowerment of – rather than contempt for – those who contribute most to the wellbeing of their communities and neighbourhoods. (Almeida 2023, 2)

In the case of Wards Corner the public-commons partnership has been developed as a prototype outside the local state and its realisation would depend on local state cooperation. Nevertheless, it demonstrates the imaginative resources and policy knowledge capacities of grassroots tenant and trader organisations and campaigners.

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Overall, the kinds of 'bottom-up' regeneration we have gestured towards above entail difficult and slow work, with profound challenges in creating inclusive structures and building consensus, winning institutional recognition and legitimacy, and acquiring and maintaining resources. But the partial and uneven shifts referenced in this chapter indicate the scope

for alternative approaches by municipal and metropolitan government, even within the constraints of financialised austerity urbanism overseen by the UK's centralised political economy.

In recent decades and especially in the age of austerity, the speculative city has been a powerful driver of urban change. Throughout this book, we have shown that it is founded on socially differentiated dispossession, despite uneven efforts by the local state to chisel out concessions through cross-subsidies dependent on market conditions and bargaining with private developers. It is an unstable and unsustainable way of governing cities and of producing housing and other urban spaces. Community campaigns and broader urban social movements have played a vital role in exposing its contradictions and unjust consequences. As efforts to move beyond the speculative city intensify, the 'battle for Haringey' offers strategic insights, positive alternatives and the inspiration of a historic success.

Notes

1 In Haringey, on the site of the Red House on West Green Road, for example, 88 new homes were set to replace a residential care home for the elderly, of which 46 would be council homes. But this involved the council losing ownership and therefore control of over 46 per cent of the land (OSC 2019).

2 On Broadwater Farm estate, as part of a £130 million programme of works agreed in 2022, two blocks – Tangmere and Northolt – were to be demolished due to structural concerns discovered during inspections carried out after the Grenfell Tower disaster. Other blocks on the estate were to see investment to 'strengthen them and make sure they all meet modern fire and safety standards' (Haringey Council 2023c).

Appendix: key tactics against speculative redevelopment

Here we summarise the key tactics that enabled members of the local community, in collaboration with some sympathetic councillors, to defeat large-scale plans for the demolition and redevelopment of council estates and other places in Haringey in 2018. To help inform other campaigns, we outline what the StopHDV coalition did and provide links to further resources. For more detailed analysis, see Chapter 5.

Seizing official opportunities

Local housing campaigners kept a careful eye on the council's approach to homes and regeneration, monitoring key strategic reports and policies, and quickly recognising the significance of the radical plans for Tottenham and the significance of the HDV. They worked to uncover further details using rights under the Freedom of Information Act – for example, about whether residents would only be offered temporary accommodation during the redevelopment rather than a permanent alternative. Official consultations and hearings gave opportunities to raise concerns. Members of Defend Council Housing contributed in 2016 to the public examination of Haringey's Local Plan – a required set of rules and planning documents shaping decisions on new developments. However, these formal 'invited spaces of participation' (Miraftab 2004) had little influence on the council leadership. Campaigners therefore worked to support critics of the HDV within the council and to build public pressure. When they turned to more confrontational tactics, they were able to defuse some criticism by showing that they had tried to use the official channels, to little avail.

Existing links between some community members and councillors laid a foundation for coordination around the HDV. For example, they were in contact through housing groups and Labour Party meetings. Most of the relationship building happened during the course of campaign, though.

Councillors have powers to investigate the leadership's policies and plans through dedicated committees and scrutiny panels. The Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel played a particularly important role in critically analysing and challenging the HDV. Councillors gathered insights from other local authorities, researchers and community groups. This helped to build a critical counternarrative about the likely outcomes and possible risks of the HDV. The panel became so concerned that it eventually called on the leadership to suspend the HDV and consider alternatives.

Again, these procedural moves were not enough to stop the powerful and committed council leadership from pursuing their plans. But they generated moments around which the grassroots campaign could rally. Most of the demonstrations were timed to coincide with key decision-making meetings in the council chamber: people massed in the street, while others entered the meeting to cheer on their allies. Through public pressure and media coverage, campaigners subverted and reinvented formal spaces of participation.

Further info

- Accessing information: UK authorities have obligations to release certain official information in response to public requests under the Freedom of Information Act. A beginner's guide to making a Freedom of Information request has been published on mysociety.org: https://tinyurl.com/DSC-FOI. Examples of requests submitted by StopHDV campaigners – around issues such as the right to return and Lendlease's tax affairs – can be found by searching on whatdotheyknow.com
- Contributing to investigations of council activities: local residents can suggest areas for review by councillors, give evidence and ask questions. Councils produce basic guidance, such as this information from Haringey: https://tinyurl.com/DSC-council
- Shaping official plans for your area: there are a number of opportunities to influence strategic plans: https://tinyurl.com/DSC-plan. See also M. Taylor & M. Edwards, 'Just space economy and planning: Opening up debates on London's economy through participating in strategic planning' (in Y. Beebeejaun (ed.), *The participatory city*, Berlin: Jovis, 2016, 76–86). Whilst opportunities to meaningfully shape planning decisions through these procedures are limited, knowing how and when key decisions are made can help to organise and time more activist tactics, such as demonstrations and protests.

Public demonstrations and protests

Members of the community were moved to demonstrate their concerns about the HDV publicly, rather than restricting themselves to the formal opportunities for engagement offered by the council. Many of the protests targeted key council meetings on the HDV. They were an opportunity to show support for the councillors who were questioning and challenging the HDV internally, and to place pressure on those who were not. Initially small-scale and homespun – with some campaigners using paper plates as placards – the demonstrations gathered strength over time. With the support of trade unions, artists and designers, StopHDV developed a recognisable logo, posters and banners.

Protests were a key opportunity for the wider community to get involved in the campaign and show the strength of support for StopHDV. People were invited along to banner-making workshops. They could join marches, speak at rallies, play music and bang pots. For some, protests were the gateway to greater involvement in the campaign. For others, they were the main form of participation. Across the board, they were exciting collective experiences through which people could feel part of a larger movement.

These events were widely shared on social media and were also a focal point for media coverage. They expanded the campaign beyond stifling institutional channels, deadened by impenetrable official documents and bureaucratic jargon, into an energising shared struggle out in the streets.

Further info

- Guidance on organising a protest – from flyers to policing and press releases – is offered by the Big Issue here: https://tinyurl.com/DSC-protest
- Rights group Liberty has this advice on making protests accessible for disabled people: https://tinyurl.com/DSC-access
- Broader tips and information on campaigning can be found in *Staying put: An anti-gentrification handbook for council estates in London*, created in 2014 by London academics and activists: https://southwarknotes.files.wordpress.com/2014/06/staying-put-web-version.pdf

Legal action

Campaigners sought legal advice from the law firm Leigh Day, which specialises in human rights and had experience with similar cases of contested redevelopment. To help fund the advice, StopHDV raised several thousand pounds through crowdfunding appeals. Most of the legal work, though, was provided for free by the firm.

The lawyers identified several challenges to the council's plans for the HDV, mostly concerning whether the local authority had followed the correct procedures in assessing impacts on inequalities and in democratic decision-making.

Ultimately, the judge deemed that the case had been brought too late. Lawyers urge people who have concerns about future development schemes to seek legal advice as quickly as possible. They also warn community members not to rely on legal methods alone to prevent redevelopment: there is very limited scope for courts to overturn government decisions entirely and it's likely that plans will be able to proceed with some modifications.

Despite that, the legal action had several strategic uses for the campaign. It heightened debate over the HDV, as the council was forced to release documents and justify its plans, while campaigners were able to present their counternarrative. It presented a high-profile opportunity for community activism – via fundraising, at the Royal Courts of Justice (where members protested and attended the hearing) and in the media. And most importantly, it bought time for the campaign to build pressure through other channels, as the legal action required that work on the HDV be suspended until a judgment was reached.

Further info

- Barrister Sarah Sackman's chapter on 'Using the law and challenging redevelopment through the courts' is available to read for free in *Community-led regeneration: A toolkit for residents and planners,* (eds) P. Sendra & D. Fitzpatrick (2020)) at https://www.uclpress.co.uk/products/125696
- The Public Interest Law Centre website offers a wealth of resources for campaigners seeking advice and inspiration for how they can use legal routes to defend their homes and places: https://www.pilc.org.uk/

Electoral tactics

A few months before the local elections, campaigners made use of the opportunity for democratic influence over the selection of Labour Party candidates. This followed various other efforts to sway councillors' stance on the HDV. As we have set out, opponents of the HDV – including some councillors – worked through official scrutiny procedures and internal discussions within the Labour group, as well as making public shows of dissent such as protests and critical media coverage. These tactics persuaded more councillors to oppose the HDV, but not enough to overturn the plans, especially given the strong commitment of the council leadership to the venture.

Campaigners therefore mobilised to convince Labour Party members to vote against the automatic reselection of sitting councillors who supported the HDV, and instead subject them to a contest with a candidate who opposed it. If a majority of members voted for this 'trigger ballot', then the existing councillor faced a competitive reselection process. Given the dominance of Labour in Haringey, it made sense to work within the party rather than wait until the election itself and try to vote in a new councillor from a different party. Critical councillors offered strategic advice to the campaign.

In mobilising for these votes, StopHDV benefitted from the high level of Labour Party membership, including many people on the left, during the late 2010s. But although the national leadership has some influence over the local level, the experience in Haringey shows that it was grassroots engagement with Labour at the council level that made the difference.

To win trigger ballots, campaigners produced leaflets and canvassed door-to-door, encouraging Labour members to vote for reselection and an anti-HDV candidate. They also used social media to raise awareness. The effort gathered pace, with early failures followed by growing success. In some cases, existing councillors changed their position, while others decided not to run for re-election or were deselected. Over a period of several months, the campaign built pressure in these ways, finally forcing the council leadership to recognise that it did not have a sufficient mandate (within the party or the public) to push through the HDV.

These activities attracted hostility from the right of the Labour Party and much of the media, which painted them as an illegitimate coup by radical entryists. To counter that perspective, campaigners needed a clear narrative, media allies and effective communications on their website and social media.

Further info

In 2017, Momentum in Sheffield created a *Guide for new and newly enthused Labour members* as an alternative to the lengthy Labour Party rulebook, which is 'written in pure Bureaucratese'. Instead, 'This is an attempt to explain the most important rules and structures in plain English.' The rules change over time but many of the key elements persist.
https://tinyurl.com/DSC-Labour

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'This important book narrates how a grassroots campaign successfully fought off one of the most appalling mega-gentrification schemes in London. It makes clear that the fight was not simply political ... but a coming together of a broad coalition of people who used practices and tactics that will be of real value in other anti-gentrification struggles locally, nationally and globally.'
Loretta Lees, Boston University

'*Disrupting the Speculative City* represents an inspirational major contribution to urban regeneration scholarship in relation to understanding how and why grassroots activists were able to successfully mount the StopHDV campaign in north London.'
Paul Watt, LSE

'This book successfully combines rigorous research and political clarity ... The book will be of interest to students and scholars of urban planning, urban geography and social movements, as well as to anyone trying to understand the contradictions of urbanism today.'
David Madden, LSE

In 2011, police violence triggered an uprising in Tottenham that laid bare decades of neglect and state violence against the area's racialised communities. In its aftermath, local leaders and corporate developers devised an aggressive redevelopment agenda that would have demolished the homes, workspaces and communities of thousands of council tenants, private renters and traders. Their plan was to transform Tottenham and surrounding areas from a diverse working-class place to a space for wealthy investors, residents and consumers.

***Disrupting the Speculative City* tells the story of how a community coalition defeated one of the most ambitious programmes of state-led gentrification in London. Known as the 'Haringey Development Vehicle' (HDV), it would have been executed through an undemocratic and speculative joint venture between the local council and the notorious international developer Lendlease. Thanks to the political creativity, tactical nous and extraordinary commitment of ordinary people, the HDV was scrapped by the local council in 2018. Drawing on the accounts of those at the heart of the struggle and analysing crucial developments in property investment, local statecraft and grassroots organising, this book explores a significant and inspirational success for campaigners in London, where social cleansing has become the default outcome of redevelopment.**

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