

The TAG Struggle (in their own words)

What TAG have been doing for the last year is 'educating' and engaging with Love Lane residents, providing information about what is really going on with the council-developer High Road West (HRW) scheme, making sure that residents understand their rights and showing them they have the power to change things.

TAG is the more democratic residents' voice because unfortunately the Residents Association is council controlled. A very small handful of people (the RA) cannot represent an entire estate without giving information to its residents about our housing situation, and the RA have not been given the full picture - just the fairy tale of regeneration. TAG, tirelessly with the help of others, have uncovered the truth and continue to inform residents with that truth. Residents are now questioning the motives of Haringey Council and the Regeneration team, realising that the plan is to move them out of the way, and they are beginning to stand up for themselves. As a community we have managed to delay them from progressing to demolition.

TAG is active on social media in highlighting our issues and alerting housing campaigners to our activities. Before lock-down we organised public meetings at a local community hall so residents could meet and discuss their concerns with each other. We regularly email updates and provide counters to the Council's attempts to sell *their* image of regen.

We support Peacock Industrial Estate (PIE) as they are also threatened with demolition by the regen proposals. Although working together is important in presenting a broad front against Haringey's plans, TAG must remain (and is) focused on our own campaign to get council housing. However, we are in close contact with our business neighbours, including Tottenham Biz, for we live and work in the same area. Ties are social as well as from joint campaigning!

In the beginning, unknown to us, Haringey played the residents against the businesses. They would tell local traders that the residents agreed with demolition. They used the "Do you want a new park?" strategy to get resident support, but never let residents know the truth that the new park would be where the Peacock Industrial Estate is. We approached the businesses to expose the truth and we work as closely as possible and support one another.

The new Tottenham stadium and walkway were already in the regen plans well before the 2011 riots. The walkway is to cater for the extra fan capacity, but in the process would see our estate demolished! Displacement of a whole community, in fact BAME communities often pay the price for area

improvements.

The protests and unrest following the police killing of Mark Duggan in 2011 were blamed on the criminality of Tottenham's young people. Racist images of gangs built on the existing racist stereotypes which had been used against Tottenham's communities in previous decades. Regenerating the area was one of the government's proposed solutions to the problems which led to the unrest in 2011. But while it is the black community that was the target of the racist rhetoric, it is all of Tottenham's council estate residents who are suffering from the government's plans for urban renewal. Cleansing working-class, multicultural council estates like Love Lane shows how racism provokes the initial justification, for a process, which in the end, effects all working-class communities.

Over the past two years we have attended many council events and met with councillors to discuss our campaign. But this participation had little impact and the Council policy didn't change. After making a statement setting out our substantial concerns to a scrutiny meeting, TAG then formally withdrew from the process because we did not have faith that the issues which we wanted addressed by Haringey Council would be put right. What Haringey Council have continuously shown TAG, is that they will work with organisations that put money into their pockets (who have gentrification agendas) and exclude local communities.

TAG had no faith in the scrutiny process for we believed that the outcome would be the same as for the investigation into the Latin Village regen proposals. Out of the 13 recommendations by the scrutiny panel Haringey Cabinet did not take any of these recommendations seriously and largely rejected them. We were not prepared to be involved in a process where scrutiny is not taken seriously. We had already experienced this with the Haringey Fairness Commission, who refused to accept and circulate evidence from Professor Loretta Lees's interviews on Love Lane.

There is a strong presence of BAME community on the Love Lane Estate, including many vulnerable adults and families. There are residents that have been on the Love Lane estate since it was built and some who only moved onto the estate a couple of weeks ago. There are many working class families living on the estate. There is a lot of anger, frustration, anxiety, a lack of trust towards Haringey council around the future of the estate. The poor performance of ALMO Homes for Haringey on repairs adds to the frustration, especially as repairs are delayed or not done because the estate is earmarked for demolition.

Haringey have abused the Localism Act 2012 where they could discharge their homeless duty into the private sector. We were placed on Love Lane for ease of decant, as temporary tenants we do not have the rights that secure tenants have. The 297 homes on the estate are now mostly made up of Temporary Accommodation residents. Around 190, mostly secure, residents have left and leaseholders have been bought out, and the Council continue to buy leases because it has to provide Lendlease with 100% available land, free of freehold and leasehold interests.

Haringey have been working on a 'Landlord offer', offering temporary tenants a permanent home if they have lived on the estate for a year. The reality is that they want a 'Yes' vote on the ballot and at best the homes will be HA or LAR rent which nobody can afford.

We have also seen the estate decline which has had a serious impact on our families' mental health and wellbeing. This is an example of 'displacement pressure', something that leads to families, individuals breaking down and giving up their will to fight to stay put, for an affordable home.

Working through this crisis is a no brainer, the reason I became a support worker is to provide help to vulnerable communities. I enjoy my work because I see the progress in those that I work with and in some way it is comforting to get away from my own family crisis of not knowing if I'll have a roof over my head in six months time.

The government, police and the press have engaged in a sustained racist campaign against our communities in Tottenham, particularly those in council housing. Council tenants are portrayed as foreign scroungers, our estates as full of gangs or Muslim terrorists. Portraying our communities, like ours, in this way, deligitimises council housing, it creates the idea that they are hotbeds of criminality and violence, occupied by aliens who don't belong in this country. This dehumanises council tenants, takes away our common humanity and ignores their need for a home just like anyone else. It tells people that our multicultural communities don't belong in Britain; we are presented as disposable, different, outsiders, not deserving the fundamental rights of a decent, safe and affordable home. Specific types of racism are the initial justification for getting rid of council housing, but the outcomes adversely affect all council estate residents, regardless of their ethnicity.