

TACKLING SOCIAL DISORDER: Tottenham Report -third meeting of eighth series

24th FEBRUARY 2012

Produced by

URBED
The Building Centre
26 Store Street
London WC1E 7BT
Tel. 07714 979 956

e-mail: n.falk@urbed.co.uk
website: www.urbed.co.uk

Special thanks to Marc Dorfman
Asst. Director Planning and
Regeneration London Borough of
Haringey who sponsored the event

February 2012

Contents

Regeneration in Tottenham	1
Hale Village N17	2
What prompts a riot?	3
How should you respond?	3
Discussion	4
Next Meeting	6
Participants and apologies	7

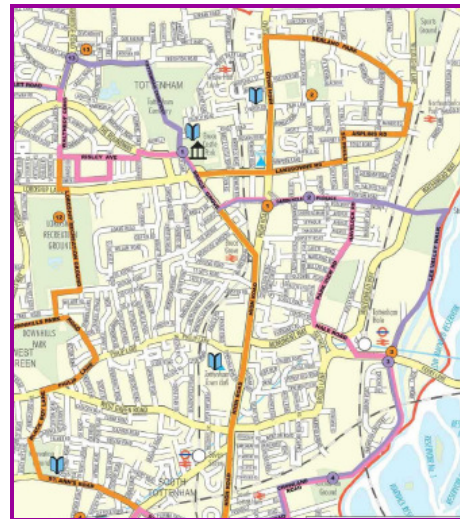
REPORT OF THE THIRD MEETING OF THE EIGHTH SERIES

TACKLING SOCIAL DISORDER, TOTTENHAM

This meeting, which was hosted by Mark Dorfman, provided an opportunity not only to consider what can be done to deal with the aftermath of riots, but also to look at ways forward for former industrial areas in the inner suburbs of London, with a guided tour around Hale Village at Tottenham Hale. This was led by the Managing Director Chris Shellard of Lee Valley Estates, who had been to meetings when he was working for Redbridge. He also showed us around their refurbishment of the Town Hall into a business and community enterprise centre, and contributed to the discussions. We were joined by Richard Simmons, who brought out conclusions from an article with Nicholas Falk which had appeared in *Planning for London*, and which draws on research by Danny Dorling into inequalities. The meeting focussed on the critical but difficult task of tackling social and community regeneration but also looked at the potential for attracting private investment into Tottenham into order to compliment the social with physical regeneration.

Regeneration in Tottenham

The Borough of Haringey is classed as part of outer London, but its old industrial areas to the East of the railway lines out of Kings Cross have the same characteristics as the most disadvantaged inner areas. Most of the old industry along the Lea Valley has closed, removing many local job opportunities. At the same time the population has changed, as many moved out to the New Towns in the 60s and 70s, and were replaced by immigrants from the Commonwealth. Their children now live in areas such as Tottenham, and there are stark contrasts with the leafy Edwardian suburbs of Crouch End and Muswell Hill, which have always been much more prosperous.



Tottenham

Yet a walk from Seven Sisters Underground Station down the **High Road** offers a great experience, a spacious boulevard, with fine late 18th century and 19th century civic buildings overlooking a large green. Members could recall the various projects to refurbish and reuse different buildings, such as an old Jewish hospital, now housing, and the development of the College of FE, with the



Tottenham High Road

superb Bernie Grant Centre tucked in behind. Clearly the previous riots 20 years earlier along with regeneration programmes, had achieved a physical transformation at least.

Chris Shellard, who first led us around **Tottenham Town Hall**, told us how a decaying building had been turned into a thriving enterprise centre with an injection of £1.5 million, and it was now one of the main meeting points, as well as serving as a church on Sunday. There is a strong demand from micro enterprises, so long as space is made available on an 'easy in easy out' basis. Lee Valley owns over one million sq ft of floor space along the River Lea, and there simply is no longer demand from large employers. Yet the area is highly accessible, and there are the amenities of the Lea Valley Regional Park nearby.



Town Hall come Legacy Business centre

Hale Village, N17, next to Tottenham Hale station, and only 15 minutes from Kings Cross, was formerly part of the largest furniture factory in the world. It had been derelict for 20 years, the subject of many studies. A joint venture with Barratt Homes and the Anglo Irish Bank, collapsed, but fortunately the HCA stepped in as equity shareholder. They put in £10 million towards the upfront infrastructure works of £27 million on what will eventually be an investment of £400 million. The scheme is now far advanced; student housing developed by Unite to a design by BDP is one of their most successful developments. Newlon Housing Trust has developed housing for rent and shared ownership, which again is proving popular.



TEN group in front of Hale Village

The vision is *'to create a sustainable, high quality, urban village which will act as a catalyst for the regeneration of Tottenham Hale (and) to establish a model for 'mixed community' integrated with the surrounding area'* The master plan is said to have been based on similar design codes to those in Hammarby Sjostad in Stockholm, though the densities seem much higher (at 800 to the hectare similar to Asian cities). Every flat has a balcony or access to open space, in some very contemporary looking buildings, which will have commercial uses at the ground floor. There is a high level of security. Parking is limited to those who have bought their units, and is below the streets. A heat network run from a biomass fuelled boiler has enabled them to achieve Code Level 4.

Walking down well-maintained residential terraces, and past a smart looking out of town retail centre and into the striking apartment blocks of Hale Village, it was hard to realise that this was close to the spot where Mark Duggan was shot by the police, an event which precipitated a riot which put London on the news round the world, and cost huge damage. The Borough is determined that after the riots this time they will tackle the root problems. We were given the latest report *Taking Tottenham Forward* that has just been published by the Tottenham Community Panel, which is chaired by the Borough's Leader.

A wide ranging discussion considered first the causes, then the response, and finally what more might be done to transform the area's image, and producing a lasting transformation.

What prompts a riot?

Richard Simmons, who had previously led Dalston City Challenge before going on to be the last Chief Executive of CAGE, argued that it was too simplistic to dismiss the riots as the work of criminals. Interviews with those who had rioted revealed a variety of motives, and while the 'trigger' was police action, the causes include a sense of growing inequalities. Most of those involved are simply young males, not career criminals. So high quality development and the replacement of industry by housing (or urban renaissance) is not enough.

The biggest problems now are not the Council estates, many of which have been renewed, but those living in private rented housing, with high rates of 'churn' who feel they have no voice or stake in society. Most of the police are young and inexperienced. They should have been able to anticipate the consequences of Mark Duggan's death, as well as responding more effectively (as they did in some parts of London). While the police may think they are 'cutting the legs off organised crime', they are sweeping up and alienating many others, through their 'stop and search' policy.

How should you respond?

We had already heard in Lambeth of how a combination of social disorder and cuts are forcing a rethink of how services are delivered. Mark Dorfman, in a very full presentation¹, explained how the Borough responded very promptly:

- The riots came as a complete surprise
- A top level team worked together to mobilise resources, using a 'task force' approach
- A talented group of young officers drew up a programme of projects on which money could be spent
- The GLA has committed £40 million, and Sir Stuart Lipton is leading efforts to promote investment.

The real casualties were independent businesses, 60% of whom were uninsured. Business was already difficult, given changing patterns of shopping. Tottenham is one of the 5% most disadvantaged areas in the country (with high levels of overcrowding).

Mark highlighted

- Swift clear up of all the damage between August 9th and 12th

¹ See Marc Dorfman for details of his presentation.

- Compensation without strings to businesses (worth some £400,000)
- The riots have brought the community together
- They have also created a resolve to address the imbalances within the borough, and stop the area being treated as a 'receptacle for London's poor'
- This is likely to involve greater enforcement of standards
- However this is happening at a time of huge cutbacks in Council capacity
- Also the replacements are not necessarily any better than what they replace e.g. Aldi's store design.

A Community Panel has just published a very comprehensive report² with specific proposals under five themes:

1. Attracting inward investment to create opportunities for the employment of local people
2. Improving the image of the area
3. Opportunities and activities for young people, particularly vulnerable young people
4. The relationship between the police and the community
5. Increasing community involvement and leadership.

But are there mechanisms for delivering more than a fraction of what is being proposed?

Discussion

With a very unsettled community and fragmented areas and racial groups, simple attempts to rebrand the area with 'I love Tottenham' slogans may be misguided. Instead it should be seen as a series of distinct neighbourhoods or character areas. It is crucial to embrace the wider residential areas, and not just the town centre. Also it is no good raising aspirations if people simply move out when they can.

The image of Tottenham to the outside world is much worse than the reality (and some £500 million has been spent on planning and regeneration in the past). It is difficult to get investors up to see what the area is really like. Hence it is going to be important to make the most of the strengths, such as transport links and history. The £10 million project backed by English Heritage to restore historic frontages had hardly been affected by the riots.

There may be scope, as in other suburban town centres, for much better residential infill schemes, particularly on the fringes where retail is no longer viable. However there is a real shortage of good models to look at and learn from.



The Green is to be extended to create a square

² Handed out at the meeting

Some questioned spending so much (£500,000) on creating a larger square around the Green, which had previously been mounded to deter travellers. Many people end up thinking you only get improvements through riots ‘*last time we got a leisure centre... if we don't get what we want we'll riot again*’. Community engagement sounds good but how do you go beyond the ‘usual suspects’ and ‘professional community representatives’?

People still want to get out when they can, so it is going to be important to provide a wider range of housing (not just high rise flats). It is also not realistic to expect local jobs to return on the scale required. You need to look at a much wider area, make the most of the transport links (including the upgraded Overground), and invest in people over many years, not just the five years of City Challenge.

Changes to the way both neighbourhoods and housing is managed could produce a real pay-off for everyone; why should streets be so much worse maintained in poorer areas – the ‘broken windows’ syndrome. Newham is already proposing to use Article Four directives to remove permitted rights of landlords to turn their houses over to multi-occupation (HMOs), as these have been proved to harbour problems. They intend to get the whole borough covered by ‘Regulated Landlords’, and will be getting tougher on any tenants who display ‘anti social behaviour’.

While there was agreement on the equal importance of tackling social and economic as well physical issues, it is still far from clear how this is to be managed. Councillors in the UK do not always understand what leadership should entail. There is no equivalent yet of the Contrats de Ville, which enabled Lille and its poorer neighbours of Roubaix and Tourquion to work together with extra funding from central government over many years. Nor have we yet tried out the kinds of ‘social etiquette’ principles used in the Netherlands or Scandinavia to emphasise the value of working together for the common good.

So discussion turned to whether some form of ‘Development Corporation’ or elected Mayor was needed in areas that would be in transition for many decades to come. John East mentioned the Mayor of Newham's Resilience ‘Manifesto’ as a possible blueprint for the way forward. In truth, there is little new being proposed for Tottenham that has not been talked about for years. People are still pursuing ‘fads’ such as the idea of every run-down area becoming a ‘cultural quarter’, or looking to grand projects, such as the new stadium for Tottenham Hotspurs to produce a turnaround. Meanwhile, there is no ongoing mechanism, other than another Town Centre Manager, for securing coordinated action that

Quid pro quo, not status quo.

Why we need a
welfare state that
builds resilience.

In this paper we express our vision for a welfare state that builds resilience – personal, community and economic. We believe a lack of resilience keeps our residents poor. We focus on what resilience means for some aspects of welfare policy but this is just one part of what we believe constitutes a comprehensive approach to tackling many social issues facing us today. Whether it's the importance of investing properly in early years, the ability to understand the impact of immigration or the need for genuine localism, led by democratically elected local councillors, we believe our vision is a blueprint for progressive local government. We will explore this further as we go forward, including the things central government must do differently.



Sir Robin Wales, Mayor of Newham.
Full report at
<http://www.newham.gov.uk/YourCouncil/Buildingstrongcommunity.htm>

involves local businesses and property owners. There is a danger with staff turnover that we will have learned little from the last three decades.

Next meeting

We have one more meeting in the current series eight, which has focussed on tackling the factors that lead to social disorder.

We are very impressed with the transformation that has taken place around Kings Cross, and wonder whether a walk around, starting at the new Concourse and taking in the University of the Arts, Kings Place, and then through to either Camden offices or Lumen (a great café converted out of a church near Regent Square might appeal). We have lined up Mike Edwards, who is senior lecturer in the Economics of Planning at the Bartlett School of Planning at UCL as a potential guest, and he has been actively working with the Kings Cross Railway Lands Group over many years.

The next step is to fix a date so please let us know what Friday in May you are most likely to be free; 11th or 25th.

We might then put forward a further ninth series, if there is enough interest, focussing on cutting energy costs (and fuel poverty) which could kick off with a visit to Watford and the BRE's demonstration homes to see how Local Authorities can do better. There was also talk of possibly visiting some retrofit projects and learning from the research of sustainability expert Henrietta Lynch. The other option is to visit a large housing estate such as a Berkley Homes association project. The May meeting will give us opportunity to discuss this further.

TEN Tottenham Meeting - 24th Feb - Delegate List
Attendees

Marc Dorfman, Assistant Director Planning & Regeneration, Haringey Council
Karen Galey, Haringey Council
David Hennings, Head of Regeneration, Catalyst Housing Group
Seema Manchanda, Assistant Director Planning Services, Wandsworth Borough Council
Nicolas Falk, Founding Director, URBED
Jess Bousie, Assistant, URBED
Darren Richards, Head of Planning & Transportation, London Borough of Sutton
Richard Simmons
Mark Lucas, Head of Regeneration, London Borough of Redbridge
John East, Divisional Director: Development Services, Newham Council

Apologies

Stewart Murray, Chief Planning & Regeneration Officer, Redbridge Council
Daniel Ratchford, Strategic Director of Environment & Leisure, London Borough of Sutton
Tom Jeffrey, Director Environment, Culture & Public Participation, Croydon Council
Pat Hayes, Executive Director Regen & Housing, Ealing Council
Stephen Tapper, Assistant Director, Place Shaping & Enterprise, Enfield Council
Ed Watson, Assistant Director Planning & Public Protection, Camden Council
Toni Antoniou, Director planning and Environment, Croydon Council
Sue Foster, Executive Director of Housing, Regeneration & Environment, Lambeth Council
Tom Titherington, Catalyst Housing Group