



## BLOCK THEIR KNOCKDOWN!

Council plan to demolish over 500 council homes & hand open spaces to developers.



One of the green spaces by Cropley Court targeted for development.



This area should be made into recreation space for residents, not private housing.

Now the elections are out of the way and Hackney Labour have power until 2010, they are turning on our estates. The council want to knock down over 500 homes and build on open spaces and car parks. Surprise, surprise, the new homes will be for housing associations or for private sale.

Estates targeted so far are Suffolk, Fellows Court, Wenlock Barn, St John's, St Leonards, De Beauvoir and Haberdashers. But this is only the beginning - the Council want to build on 13 sites on Wenlock Barn alone. Expect more estates to be included later.

Instead of focussing on the task of spending our rents and service charges on cleaning and repairing our homes the Council's main push is to hand over sites to developers. Most estates are already overcrowded and we need green spaces, playgrounds and parking. Hackney Independent

sees these spaces as being vital to our community. Labour sees them as an opportunity to bring in their developer friends.

The council plans will bring chaos to estates that are already overcrowded. Even the council admit that Hackney has the third highest level of over-crowding in England. How will these plans help matters? Worse still, the plan is for at least 3 out of every 10 new homes built on our estates to be private - for homeowners or high renters. You can bet that the end result will be more than 3 out of 10.

A council report states that extra funds will be put into the targeted estates to "assist residents to consent." - in other words they are trying to bribe residents into going along with their privatising agenda! Of course this also means less money for other estates. The report also states that "Shoreditch Trust representatives

have been involved in the development of this strategy." We spoke to some of the elected resident representatives and the plans are news to them! Worse still the Council claim they are carrying out "early consultation" for the proposals but a council insider has told Hackney Independent that the decisions have already been made.

Any new building in Hackney should be council housing for overcrowded tenants, and young people needing a place of their own - and shouldn't take away space on existing estates. We need to campaign against these plans and stop Hackney Council from flattening council flats and destroying play areas and replacing them with private homes. This isn't just an issue for those already targeted by the council. Your estate could be next!

For more information on the council's plans go to [www.hackneyindependent.org](http://www.hackneyindependent.org).

### Council Jargon Explained

The Proposals for the 'Next Estate Regeneration Programme' are written in council jargon. Here we pick out some of the quotes and tell you what they actually mean:

**"We aim to continue tenure diversification"** This means they want fewer council tenants and more private renters and home owners.

**"Selective demolition"** This means knocking council houses down.

**"Land assembly and decanting"** Dividing up any open space into packages for developers and getting the tenants out.

**"Infill opportunities"** This means building on any available open space.

*"I simply do not believe that there is sufficient 'underused' land on these 28 estates to fit in 550 homes, so the Council must be defining areas as 'underused' which residents do in fact use. To the Council and the developers, 'underused' probably means 'not making money'"* **Janine Booth, Marcon Estate TRA**

*"Hackney Council won't be happy until they've sold the entire estate off"* **Harry, Wenlock Barn**

*"I don't want local green spaces used for development"* **Ian, Wenlock Barn**

*"Have you seen Hackney Today recently? An article states 'I love Hackney because of its green spaces'"* **Tony Butler, Hackney Independent**

## Who loves Hackney?

A big debate has kicked off following the announcement by a Channel 4 Property Show that Hackney is 'the worst place to live in Britain'.

The young professionals who have been buying houses in the area have used their privileged positions in the media to jump to Hackney's defence. This article from the BBC's website is a hilarious example: "As a resident of the borough - albeit for only the last four months - let me tell you one thing: the findings are rubbish. For many of us, this pearl of cultural diversity and tolerance in north-east London is little short of an earthly Eden. Bars, restaurants, parks, canals reminiscent of the great days of Venice - we have it all on our doorstep".

Middle class mayor Jules Pipe has been publicly defending Hackney, criticising the programme and claiming that "their survey takes no account of the things that really make

a place great; people, architecture, culture, nightlife, parks". He has asked everyone in the borough to "wear your I love Hackney badge with pride" in protest at the TV show.

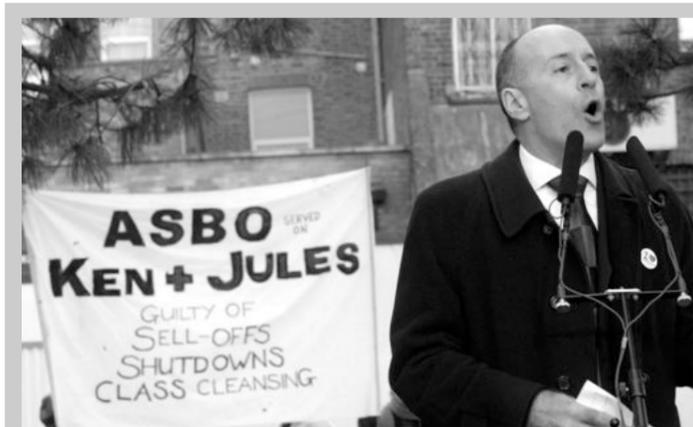
Unfortunately for the Mayor, many residents seem to have taken a rather different view. "Where are all the letters of love for Hackney?" asked the Gazette as it printed a page full of angry letters attacking Pipe and complaining about "rotting windows, cockroaches, rats, burnt out cars, no playgrounds for children" and pointing out the levels of crime in the area. "The worst place to live, how right you are" wrote a resident from Haggerston Estate.

These very different reactions clearly show that there are now two very different realities in Hackney - one for those who can afford to enjoy the bars, boutiques and 'architecture' and another where basic needs like decent housing are not being met. The angry letters in the Gazette have

exposed Pipe's pathetic 'I love Hackney' campaign as a classic piece of New Labour spin. Rather than tackling any of the real problems faced by most working people all the council have to offer is an empty slogan.

Despite Jules Pipe's attempts to present himself as a man of the people, defending "poorer people" against the "middle class snobs" at Channel 4, it's clear that the council seem far more interested in attracting profiteering developers and posh professionals into the area with 'culture' and 'nightlife' than sorting out conditions on council estates.

The real truth of what New Labour have planned for Hackney was grimly spelled out on the Channel 4 property show: "Property developers, who are expecting big returns resulting from the Olympic games covet the area. It might be the least pleasant place to live in the UK, but you'd be a fool not to invest here..."



### ASBO for Hackney Mayor!

Protesters at a regeneration launch in Dalston called for Jules Pipe and Ken Livingstone to be issued with ASBOs for Institutional Anti-Social Behaviour for their support of sell-offs, shutdowns and 'class cleaning'. The mayors were speaking at the opening of a new square on Gillett Street off Kingsland Road, once the site of the Colin Roach centre which provided advice to local people. The square is now billed as one of Ken Livingstone's 'Civilising Spaces' - does that mean that Dalston people were uncivilised before the GLA stepped in?

Gillett Square is the latest piece of 'cultural-regeneration' in Hackney. Regeneration agencies promise new buildings and 'arts' for the community but time after time these projects just raise property prices and push out local people to make way for yuppies. In fact you can already see luxury penthouses going up around the new square. The protestors were pointing out that only yards away from this 'celebration', the council is demolishing the old Four Aces club (AKA Dalston Theatre) to make way for a huge tower block of high cost private homes and has sold off shops to off-shore developers, driving out local businesses to make way for the 'Olympic transport interchange'. That's Regeneration.

# Bad Sports

Recent reports suggest the original £2.4 billion budget for the 2012 Olympics has gone up to nearly £5 billion. Since London Council Tax payers will be helping to foot the bill here's a guide to what you can expect for your money:

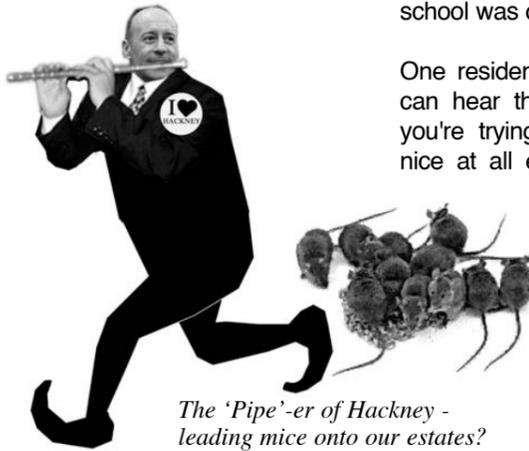
- House prices pushed up further fuelling housing crisis
- Rent increases for private tenants as landlords cash in
- Local people driven out of their homes and businesses
- Loss of playing fields, allotments and areas of local beauty
- Huge expenditure on security and police crackdowns
- Field day for developers to make a profit
- Local tax payers counting the cost for years to come
- Lottery money diverted from children's sports projects .

Promises about "regeneration" and "long term local jobs" were made for the Millennium Dome in Greenwich, but failed to materialise. If an area of a city deserves regeneration then it deserves to happen without the Olympic Games.

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## Plague of mice hits Laburnum Street

After the demolition of the Laburnum Primary school to make way for yet another 'City Academy', residents of the area have suffered an invasion of mice fleeing the wreckage left by Hackney Council.



The 'Pipe'-er of Hackney - leading mice onto our estates?

Hackney Council's policy to curb the infestation, a supply of mouse traps, is actually encouraging the mice to wheedle their way into homes. One family in Laburnum Court have already caught twenty mice since the school was demolished.

One resident has told us "you can hear them at night when you're trying to sleep...it's not nice at all especially if there's young children in the house".

It seems that the infestation is spreading further afield. A resident on the York Row

Estate has also complained to the council about an infestation in her flat.

Although disabled she was left to hunt down the mice herself after getting no response from the local housing office. "I caught two live ones on one occasion and left them outside the housing office in a plastic bag. It was the only way I could think to get them to take me seriously" she told Hackney Independent.

A Laburnum Street resident puts it perfectly: "we are always getting propoganda about 'decent' homes in Hackney Today. Is this what they mean?"

## In the last issue we started a debate around CCTV and ASBOs and asked you for your views. Haggerston resident James Ballhatchet has responded with this piece about how Hackney Council's anti-social behaviour is hitting teenagers hardest.

Britain's Teenagers have now been labelled the worst in Europe for alcohol consumption, drug taking and promiscuity. Speaking as a 17 year old 'hoody', I see many teenagers being excluded from society and lacking social status in the community in which they live. As a consequence, crime is on the increase and involvement in community life (including the democratic process) is low because teenagers feel they don't have a significant role to play in society.



James and his hoody

breakdown in community relations. Things like fully operational and affordable community leisure centres would be beneficial to teenagers, so why has Hackney Council decided to close these amenities?

Things like ASBO's (anti-social behaviour orders) are not even fit for purpose, much like the Council. This policy of handing out ASBOs to hood wearing teenagers is just like handing out confetti at a wedding. All ASBOs do is to shift the offender into another community and the scheme even lacks the resources needed to

check them up. An ASBO is considered to be 'a badge of honour' by many teenagers. Instead of being a deterrent to prevent crime they are often seen as an incentive to commit it. On the streets of Hackney an ASBO often confers street cred.

But there will be no need for teenagers to be anti-social if social exclusion is tackled head on. But how is this possible if the Council is taking a coercive approach to the problem?

Deliberately criminalising a whole generation is only storing up more trouble for the future. While politicians may find it convenient to scapegoat today's youth, policing is not a long term solution to these problems.

## Broadway Market Matters

Most readers already know about the Broadway Market traders who faced imminent eviction after their properties were sold to property developers. The daily threat of eviction faced by Lowell Grant (a.k.a. - Spirit) from his Caribbean foodstore at 71 Broadway Market is still drawing press attention and the campaign to support him has run several successful reggae dance nights.

Spirit is now facing a showdown with his heartless landlords at the Court of Appeal. At the time of going to press this will be in December. Locals will be out in force to ensure that the judges see the anger this issue has caused.

As a direct result of the Broadway Market campaign, Hackney Council held an enquiry into the sell offs of council properties which has yet to produce its final report. This will probably be delivered in January. Campaigners fear that the Council intends to gloss over the real issues and so it is important that we continue to put pressure on the Council.

If you want to help support Spirit or the campaign against the council's sell offs look for updates on the website: [34broadwaymarket.omweb.org](http://34broadwaymarket.omweb.org) or contact 07939 333465.

## HAGGERSTON COMMUNITY CENTRE

179 Haggerston Road, E8

### Seniors Bingo Club

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday (1.30pm - 5.00pm)

### Youth Club

Wednesday (6.00pm - 8.00pm or 6.30pm - 8.30pm)

[www.haggerstoncommunity.org.uk](http://www.haggerstoncommunity.org.uk) for a list of regular events

## hackney credit union

### What is a credit union ?

Credit unions are financial co-operatives owned and controlled by their members. They offer savings, loans and a range of other financial services e.g. cover for funeral costs - to local people.

### How is it different from a bank?

Banks are owned by private shareholders and all profits are returned to them. Hackney Credit Union is owned and controlled by every

member, who employ a small professional staff team to run the Credit Union on their behalf. After meeting running costs, the profits are returned to the members through annual returns known as dividends. So the money stays local and in the pockets of members.

### Who can join ?

Anyone living, working or studying in Hackney.

225 Mare Street, London, E8 3QE

020 8986 6868 [info@hackneycreditunion.co.uk](mailto:info@hackneycreditunion.co.uk)

[www.hackneycreditunion.co.uk](http://www.hackneycreditunion.co.uk)

# The tragedy of Holly Street

On October 1st on the Holly Street Estate, a father of two was stabbed to death on his doorstep by a gang of young people after he had complained about the noise they were making outside his home. The incident has finally forced the powers that be to ask serious questions about the regeneration of Holly Street.

Five years ago as Tony Blair visited the 'Flag Ship' project on Holly Street, Hackney Independent's Peter Sutton went on record saying that knocking down a problem estate, rebuilding and privatising it would not address the problems of youth unemployment, drugs and poverty in the area. Today even the Evening Standard is writing about how Labour's vision of regeneration is in trouble.

Solving social problems on estates like Holly Street takes a very different approach to the one championed by New Labour. Their 'vision' of 'mixed communities' involves bringing in rich people to the area to solve its problems - this is why over a third of the new homes on the estate were high cost private dwellings. Of course this does nothing to tackle inner-city deprivation and the consequences of poor schools, lack of affordable amenities and unemployment. Solving these

inequalities is something that Labour are not prepared to commit themselves to. In fact the divide between rich and poor has got wider since they came to power in 1997.

Those in power seem oblivious to the real problems faced by people in Hackney. They desperately want to change the facts so that 'regeneration' looks like a success story. In March 2006, after the arrest of some drug-dealers on Holly Street estate, Labour Minister Hazel Blears claimed that "the problems on the Holly Street estate have now been removed for the long term".

In October 2006, Cllr Eric Ollerenshaw, leader of Hackney's Tory Group asked helplessly in the Hackney Gazette, "what has gone wrong that such a tragedy could occur after so much goodwill, so many good intentions and so much public money?" The government's own Ofsted report into Hackney's Youth Services might provide a clue. Ofsted's 2006 report found that "The range of youth work provision is insufficient to meet the needs of young people aged 13 to 19 years". Scoring Hackney youth services bottom for leadership and resources, the report concludes that the service is "one that does not deliver minimum requirements for users".

The Cityzen project have talked to young people on Holly Street to ask them what they think is wrong. Together with drugs, crime and lack of money, the complaint of the majority of young people was that there is little for them to do: "They closed down our youth club and did not even tell us why", said one.

Their report tells a story of mistrust fostered by broken promises, boredom, and no access to local facilities. Anger is especially directed at the Queensbridge Sports and Community Centre which is not very welcoming to young people. This centre, which looks like a community hall in the centre of Holly Street tends to give priority to private organisations for functions. When Cityzen arranged to meet up with youths there they were even refused entry.

It would be naive to believe that investing in youth facilities will solve all Holly Street's or Hackney's problems. But it would be a start. While Hackney's politicians rub their hands at the prospect of the Olympics and other high-profile developments, they ignore the very people they say 'regeneration' is supposed to help. Meanwhile, innocent people die and potentially good kids get sucked further and further into trouble.

## About Hackney Independent

Hackney Independent is a local community-based political organisation. We deliver thousands of copies of this free newsletter to homes across the Haggerston, Hoxton and Queensbridge area giving you the news you won't hear from Hackney Today. We have also stood in the local elections, take part in community campaigns, and organise practical stuff like advice sessions & support the Hackney Independent Kids' Cinema.

We want to carry on defending homes and facilities for ordinary people in Hackney - but we can't do it without your involvement. You can assist in a number of ways, such as by helping deliver or producing our newsletter, getting involved in our other activities or just by keeping us informed of what is happening in your part of the area or estate.

If you would like to know more, get in touch with Carl Taylor on 020 7254 3057, or email us at [info@hackneyindependent.org](mailto:info@hackneyindependent.org).