

Cities, Communities and Homes: Is the Urban Future Livable?

1. Paper / Proposal Title:

Producing Housing Plans for London's Olympic Area: The Role of Conflicting Agendas and Interests Coming from Above, Across and Below in the English Planning System

2. Format:

Written paper / verbal presentation

3. Author(s) Name:

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4. University or Company Affiliation:

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5. Abstract (300 words):

1st April 2012. A significant day for east London, for it marked the day that the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC) was established to oversee the planning and delivery of urban development within London's Olympic area. East London has historically suffered, and continues to suffer, from some of the highest levels of socio-economic deprivation seen within England. Ostensibly, the urban development that the LLDC is planning for is geared towards addressing the socio-economic needs of east London's multi-ethnic working class communities. But, what development agendas are the LLDC actually pursuing within its urban development plans? Whose interests are being promoted and whose interests are being sidelined within the LLDC's urban development plans? Critically, what role does the English planning system play in shaping what agendas and whose interests are being pursued within the LLDC's urban development plans?

In this paper, I address these questions by exploring the governance processes and governance actors involved in producing the LLDC's housing plans, particularly the LLDC's 'affordable' housing plans, for London's Olympic area. I draw on interview material, ethnographic research, and planning document analysis to highlight the conflicting national, metropolitan, local and neighbourhood level interests tussling to shape the LLDC's 'affordable' housing plans. In my analysis, I particularly pay attention to the role that the English planning system plays in structuring the power that various governance actors and various agendas have to shape the LLDC's 'affordable' housing plans. I argue that the English planning system's operation within a neoliberal landscape, and its top-down hierarchical and regulatory structure, mean that social need is ceding to financial greed within the LLDC's housing plans. Residential communities within London's Olympic area are not passively accepting this situation, however. Thus, in this paper, I also highlight the multi-faceted strategies that these communities are adopting to redress this situation.

6. Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Cecil Sagoe is an ESRC funded PhD candidate within the Geography department at University College London. His research interests lie in the intersecting areas of housing, planning and politics. These interests are reflected in his PhD project which is titled: Politics, Power and Planning for Housing within the London Legacy Development Corporation. Within this project he is examining how the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC) is overseeing the planning and delivery of urban development within London's Olympic area. His research explores how a variety of state, market and civil society actors are collaborating/competing with one another to shape the direction of travel of the LLDC's housing plans. Within his PhD, Cecil is particularly interested in examining how residential communities have attempted to centre their collective social needs within the housing plans that the LLDC have produced.