

# Narratives of Regeneration and Legacy in East London

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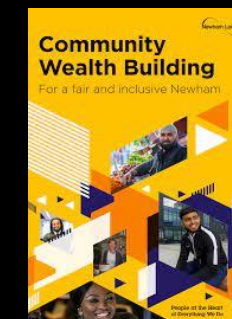
# Some Context

- The regeneration of East London did not start with Olympics
- Here we look at the evolution of regeneration approaches, how they interact with legacy discourses their significance for today's discussion
- Some key questions
  - What kind of regeneration, what kind of legacy? Regeneration and legacy mean many different things to many different people
  - Who decides?
  - Regeneration in, regeneration of, or regeneration for (Raco)?
  - What next?



# Phases of East London Regeneration

- **Phase One; 1974-79/81**  
public sector-led, address local needs, Keynesian
- **Phase Two; 81-87,**  
addressing market failure
- **Phase Three; 87-98**  
The second wave, consensus,
- **Phase Four; 98-2019**  
'City East', world city, Olympic Bid, sustainable communities
- **Phase Five 2019 –**  
Bouncing Back Better ?  
Inclusive Growth
- **Phase Six 2022 –**



# Bringing the West End into the East End

- Thatcherite years, LDDC – inner city problem was lack of private sector investment, therefore remove planning and bring in private development
- Benefits would then ‘trickle-down’ to communities
- Classic example Docklands and UDCs and Prestige Projects/Mega Events
  - unaccountable agencies, lack of community voices
  - Lack of planning and regulation
  - East End derelict and empty – blank sheet
  - Property-development led
  - Neo-liberal
  - But based on public investment and land ownership
  - Results – widely criticized. Development in.



# The Second Wave

- Out of political change and conflict a new 'model' emerged
- Attempts to include some benefits through agreements eg social housing, training
- But no changes in decision making in major regeneration sites
- However, schemes such as Stratford City Challenge emerged based on— 'holistic regeneration'





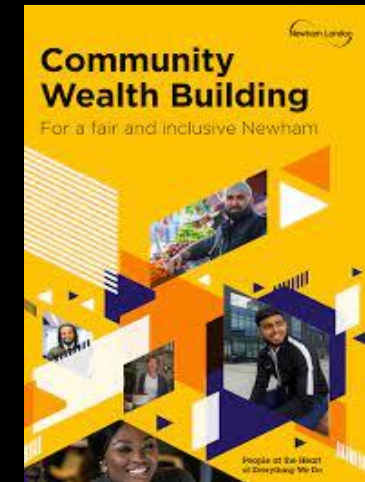
# A New Regeneration Narrative

- ‘We’re not doing a Docklands here?’
- Possible to combine economic growth with community inclusion through private sector investment, planning gain, claims of more open governance and partnerships but still UDCs and exclusions
- ‘City East’, Thames Corridor and East End as a global gateway;
- Sustainable communities as a key term reflected in Legacy Masterplans
- Examples – Westfield, Royal Docks. Rhetoric of moving from development *in* but who for?
- In practice delivery of community benefits eg affordable housing fell short of expectations, but some benefits delivered
- Semblance of inclusivity but vulnerable to shifts in property market and balance of power usually in favour of private sector eg through land disposals



# Counternarratives and Alternatives

- About a locally democratic approach, addressing local needs, local control over land and resources, an alternative economic agenda. Development *for*
- Community-led examples, TELCO, PEACH
- More recently public sector-led ; community wealth building etc
- Show alternatives possible but barriers and marginalisation



# Legacy Narratives; Convergence

- Olympic host boroughs' 'convergence' vision adopted 2010
- “Within 20 years, the communities which host the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games will enjoy the same social and economic chances as their neighbours across London”.
- ‘Host’ boroughs: Barking & Dagenham, Greenwich, Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets, and Waltham Forest
- Renamed growth boroughs & supported by the GLA through the London Plan, targets & timeframes



# Mixed data

- Mixed picture
- 2015, Tower Hamlets, Hackney & Waltham Forest ranked in most deprived 30% boroughs nationally
- By 2019, only Hackney among growth boroughs
- Also due to gentrification and dilution poverty
- Indictment child poverty statistics: Tower Hamlets, Newham & Hackney have highest rates in UK (Derecki 2020)

# Outcomes

- Games provided an initial focus for new investment activity, but short-lived and resulted in mainly physical and economic gains
- “The gap in many quality of life indicators between the six host boroughs and the rest of London (known as ‘convergence’) is not being closed. The gap in terms of sporting or physical activity rates has got worse too.”
  - Relighting the torch: securing the Olympic legacy, London Assembly 2017



# 'Trickle down'

- Entered mainstream as a critical term used by Bill Clinton 1992 Presidential election campaign in response to Reaganomics 1980s
- Rationale that bringing private finance and investment into places 'trickles down' into poorest places that need it the most
- A rising tide lifts all boats
- Trickle down associated with post industrial, often waterfront regeneration, from Bilbao to Docklands
- Iconic waterfront projects/mega events eg Rio, World Cup

# Levelling up

- Trickle down repackaged as Convergence & now Levelling up - interchangeable narratives
- Discourse of regeneration from Docklands to Olympics to Levelling up
- Can it promote pockets of change eg TELCO or is it little more than PR, establishing a hegemonic common sense around regeneration?
- Both can co-exist



# Conclusions

- Nothing inevitable about the evolution of regeneration and legacy in East London – result of political choices and shifts in governance and strategy
- There are alternatives
- Regeneration takes a generation and longer – it's not over yet and what happens next is vitally important to the future of the park and for the people of East London