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**Breaking up communities?
The social impact of housing demolition
in the late twentieth century**

**Record of a study and information sharing day
November 2nd 2012, York**

Authored by the participants

Edited by Becky Tunstall

Acknowledgements

Thanks to all the participants in the study and information sharing day for the ideas and experiences they shared, and for the discussion that took place.

Thanks to Atholynne Lonsdale, who organised the day.

Thanks to Alison Wallace, who prepared notes of the presentations and discussion.

Thanks to the Arts and Humanities Research Council, who paid for the day and who supported the literature review.

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Introduction

One in seven of all homes found in big cities in England and Wales in 1955 had been demolished by 1985. 'Slum clearance' has been part of the history of a substantial minority of families, neighbourhoods and communities across the UK. Until the mid-1960s, clearance was generally seen as costly but essential and worthwhile. Then opinions began to change: demolition began to be seen as ineffective, expensive - and socially costly, because it 'broke up communities'.

What can we learn looking back? How strong was the evidence for the idea that clearance broke up strong communities against the will of residents? Did things vary from place to place? And are there any similarities with more recent housing demolition?

On November 2nd 2012, the Centre for Housing Policy at the University of York hosted a study and information sharing day in central York. It was attended by a total of 40 people who were interested in the history of housing demolition, or who had been affected by demolition as a resident, activist, professional or academics.

Prof. Becky Tunstall of the Centre for Housing Policy and Dr. Stuart Lowe of the Department of Social Work and Social Policy and the University of York presented the interim results of a new review of literature on slum clearance in England 1945-75 they had carried out, which aimed to explore the extent to which slum clearance 'broke up communities'. This project was supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, as part of its Connected Communities programme.

Nearly half of those who attended the day made short presentations sharing their experiences with the group. There were also active discussions. This paper records the presentations and discussions that took place.

This record of the day will be published on the Centre for Housing Policy website at www.york.ac.uk/chp. The literature review will be published in 2012 on the same website.

For any further information about the study and information sharing day, this report, or the literature review, or to share your experiences of housing demolition, whether as a resident, activist, professional or academic, please get in touch on: becky.tunstall@york.ac.uk or 01904 321 475.

Study and information sharing day participants

ARRIGOITIA, Dr Melissa Fernandez	London School of Economics
BELOTTI, Alice	London School of Economics
BRADLEY, Quintin	Leeds Metropolitan University
BRIGHT, Janis	Sheffield Hallam
BROWN, Jonathan	Save Britain's Heritage
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CARMICHAEL, Ian	Newcastle Tenants and Residents Federation
CARMICHAEL, Paula	Newcastle Tenants and Residents Federation
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EARNSHAW, John	Lansdown Housing Consultancy
ELLIS, David	University of York
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FOWLEY, Mabel	Newcastle Tenants and Residents Federation
GRAHAM, Brenda	Newcastle Tenants and Residents Federation
HAILE, Azeb	Newcastle Tenants and Residents Federation
HARRISON, Karen	Newcastle Tenants and Residents Federation
HUGGILL, Simon	Darwen Town Council
KERRY-GREEN, Carol Ann	Association Genealogists and Researchers in Archives
LAMBERT, Mick	Newcastle Tenants and Residents Federation
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PETHERICK, Anne	Kentmere House

POWER, Anne	London School of Economics
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REDMAN, Peter	Housing Futures
RICHARDSON, Liz	Manchester University
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STEPHENSON, Liz	Newcastle Tenants and Residents Federation
TAYLOR, Barbara	Newcastle Tenants and Residents Federation
TUNSTALL, Becky	University of York
WALLACE, Alison	University of York
WHEELER, Dennis	Newcastle Tenants and Residents Federation
WHITTAKER, Catherine	Homes Under Threat (HUT) network
WILSON, Sylvia	Homes Under Threat (HUT) network

'Breaking up Communities?'

**Slums: Where they come from and what they are -
background and context**

Presentation prepared for 'Breaking up communities' Study and
information sharing day 10am-4pm, November 2nd 2012, York

Dr Stuart Lowe

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Why slums?

- England had the first Industrial Revolution leading to urbanization - the growth of large cities
- Housing provided by private landlords who were investors - low wages meant low standards
- Excrement collected in soil carts, overcrowding, airless and stinking, no water, little light, falling down...
- Millions of working families were trapped unable to afford better housing and unable to afford transport



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George Orwell *The Road to Wigan Pier*

"As you walk through the industrial towns you lose yourself in labyrinths of little brick houses blackened by smoke, festering in planless chaos round miry alleys and little cindered yards where there are stinking dust-bins and lines of grimy washing and half-ruinous w.c.s. The interiors of these houses are always very much the same, though the number of rooms varies between two or five. All have an almost exactly similar living-room, ten or fifteen feet square, with an open kitchen range; in the larger ones there is a scullery as well, in the smaller ones the sink and copper are in the living-room. At the back there is the yard, or part of a yard shared by a number of houses, just big enough for the dustbin and the w.c.s. Not a single one has hot water laid on. You might walk, I suppose, through literally hundreds of miles of streets inhabited by miners, every one of whom, when he is in work, gets black from head to foot every day, without ever passing a house in which one could have a bath.

For it is to be noted that the majority of these houses are old, fifty or sixty years old at least, and great numbers of them are by any ordinary standard not fit for human habitation. They go on being tenanted simply because there are no others to be had. And that is the central fact about housing in the industrial areas: not that the houses are poky and ugly, and insanitary and comfortless, or that they are distributed in incredibly filthy slums round belching foundries and stinking canals and slag-heaps that deluge them with sulphurous smoke—though all this is perfectly true—but simply that there are not enough houses to go round."



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The 1930s clearances

- Shortages caused by World War I meant no attempt on slums in 1920s
- Second Labour Government - Housing Act 1930 required LAs to clear slums in 5 years, reduced subsidy enabled 340,000 slums cleared and replaced by council houses/flats
- Set up an administrative system which was to be resumed after World War II



Post-war clearances

- Huge shortages caused by the war - 450,000 bombed out, no building for 6 years, increase in nos of households
- Only possible to start clearances again in mid-1950s Housing Repairs and Rent Act 1954 and Housing Acts 1956 and 1957



Definition of a slum - dwellings 'unfit for human habitation'

- Section 4 of the Housing Act 1957 refers to a list of issues that come into play in defining an unfit property:
 - state of repair
 - stability
 - freedom from damp
 - natural lighting
 - ventilation
 - water supply
 - drainage and sanitary conveniences
 - facilities for the storage, preparation and cooking of food and for the disposal of waste water
- ...areas where more than one house is defective were dealt with under a 'clearance area' procedure. This can refer to issues of so called 'bad arrangement'



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Post-war housing conditions- early 1950s...

- 2 million households did not have electricity or gas and so their houses would be lit by candles or oil lamps and cooking done on open fires or ranges (about 15 per cent of households);
 - 60 per cent of households did not have hot water in their dwelling
 - 40 per cent had no bath/shower'
 - central heating was rare, only a few cent of dwellings (1960 - 5-6%)
- Slums were only part of a problem of housing standards 'old but not unfit' became an issue in the 1970s
(see Holmans' article in Housing Finance Review, 2000 for detail)



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Scale of the 1950s clearances...

Slum clearances were a major post-war 'big state' policy (NHS, NCB, BR etc)

1955 - 1985 1.5 million slums cleared; 3.7 million people. This is about 15 per cent of population!

25 per cent of pre-1914 housing stock eliminated

47 per cent took place in 20 largest cities...

eg in Sheffield 46,000 properties cleared which was about 30 per cent of the city's housing - 175,000 people.

(mostly private landlord tenants switched to new LA flats)

45 per cent of clearance in smaller towns and cities



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Slum clearance in major cities (Yelling, 2000)

Cities	Early, 1955-64		Peak, 1965-74		Late, 1975-85		Total	
	Nos.	B	Nos.	B	Nos.	B	Nos.	C
Newcastle*	4,816	28	7,904	45	4,695	27	17,415	17
Sunderland*	5,799	31	4,448	39	1,163	10	11,370	17
Bradford*	11,490	36	14,634	45	6,045	19	32,169	22
Hull	4,450	19	10,658	46	8,578	36	23,686	24
Leeds*	21,210	36	25,660	44	12,135	21	59,005	27
Sheffield	9,665	21	18,506	40	18,388	40	46,559	30
Bolton*	4,653	24	7,698	40	7,144	36	19,495	23
Liverpool	12,206	24	30,676	61	7,185	14	50,067	25
Manchester	18,545	25	43,300	39	11,691	16	73,536	35
Salford*	8,613	28	14,697	48	7,616	25	30,926	33
Leicester	6,608	45	6,445	44	1,688	12	14,741	17
Nottingham	3,253	12	14,976	54	9,573	34	27,802	30
Birmingham	16,005	28	37,288	65	4,149	7	57,412	18
Coventry	1,489	31	2,732	38	535	11	4,726	6
Stoke	5,638	38	5,506	37	3,861	26	15,005	18
Bristol	4,975	63	1,689	21	1,197	15	7,861	7
Portsmouth	2,773	33	4,629	55	975	12	8,377	13
Southampton	2,268	42	2,289	42	908	17	5,465	10
Cardiff	857	19	1,941	44	1,610	37	4,408	7
Sub total	145,443	28	256,046	50	109,136	27	510,625	22
Greater London	45,113	36	56,710	45	24,339	29	126,162	6
Total	190,556	30	312,756	49	133,475	21	636,787	14



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Conclusion

- Over the two periods of clearances in 1930s and 1955-1980 about 20 per cent of whole population involved (some probably twice)
- Issue of whether to clear 'old but not unfit' housing in 1970s - timing is important to the assessment
- The clearances were a major state-managed project. People were thankful to move to warm flats with hot water and electricity
- At the time thought of as a technical exercise mainly mounted by engineers, planners, architects politicians ...but rarely any evidence of what the people thought or what happened to them
- The slum clearances were a revolutionary experiment with the lives of ordinary people on a massive scale. They changed the built environment in all the great cities but what happened to the people and communities is a major gap in the social history of Britain.



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Park Hill and Hyde Park flats, Sheffield 1971 (author's photograph)



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Discussion

Anne Power- Made the point that the data recording the numbers of people affected and why is 'dodgy' – numbers reported as defective or cleared, however, old but fit houses were also cleared.

(Note: In a few cases, people making points during discussions could not be identified: their comments are denoted 'Anon'.).

Anon. – Clearance of the 1950s subject to the deference common in the post war period and the 60s changed that, now we have rights of the individual over the rights of the community, which is a big cultural change. Also there is less deference but also people were not told of the reasons for clearance etc in the 50s as the council approached the private landlords and not the tenants. Tenants were just given notice by the landlords and had little time in which to come to terms with it.

Ian Carmichael- Also problem in data is whether they refer to buildings or dwellings, as several dwellings per building, and LAs adopted various practices and so no consistent data in the LA returns at the time. The magnitude of the clearances is not in doubt but the exact reporting of them uncertain.

Carol Ann Kerry-Green- As a historical researcher, agreed data poor.

Dave Ellis - Supported the point that slum clearances were a massive state intervention but also a massive private sector intervention as land cleared for developers who in some districts (but not all) but contracted to build replacement homes. So issue an example of state intervention but also of a corporatist state.

Alison Ravetz –Another point about the data. From 1930s to 1975 between 3.5-4.5 million people removed but maybe up to 5 million as doesn't think all the people were counted. Issue of single lodgers not being counted and who removed themselves ahead of demolition. Also only received compensation if an owner, and council tenancies only offered to tenants themselves, so single lodgers not seen as in need or counted.

David Ellis - historian and accords that council records of clearance and removals are poor, some of the best resources are those of community action campaigns. He's looking into it in Leeds. Leeds had large stock of back to back that were considered to be unfit until the 1970s, when a "leeds method" was adopted to prolong the life of homes identified for clearance, which only served to demonstrate that the homes had a life and so opposition to clearances became greater. Also the new estates were on periphery of Leeds so there was a wide district over which people could be dispersed and thus communities broken up.

Yes the communities were broken up but there were significant social changes prior to clearance, such as labour market and social mobility and people had been leaving older communities already all over the UK. So clearance not the only reason. Also priority was

given to people in clearance areas so some communities re-established themselves in some places. There was also planning blight that caused disruption to communities prior to clearance and some communities were more settled than others anyway, as others were subject to flux, immigration and change anyway.

There is also a point about how you define communities anyway as the act of resisting clearances or securing best outcomes for tenants established bonds that extended beyond removal, they had loyalty and a community of interest following dispersal, rather than community of proximity.

David Ellis – Leeds doubled its population in just 30 years so there was a great influx of people anyway. Also made a point that he wouldn't debate there was a housing shortage and there is overcrowding but that there is enough space and stock its just that there is a shortage of council housing.

'Breaking up communities?'

The evidence on slum clearance 1945-85 and what it tells us about the 'breaking up of communities':

Results of literature review

Presentation prepared for 'Breaking up communities' Study and information sharing day 10am-4pm, November 2nd 2012, York

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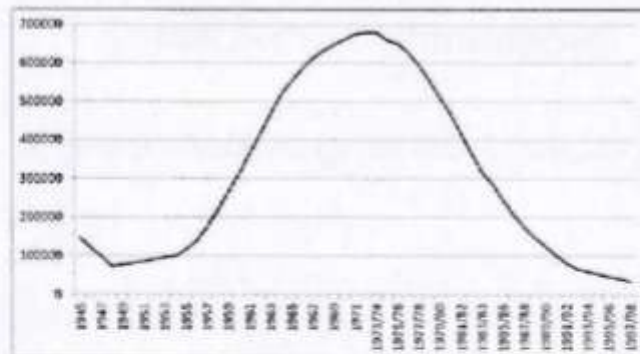


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Slum clearance - the impact on residents

Households experiencing demolition or closure in the preceding decade,
1945-1997/98



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"Comparatively little attention has been paid to the... sociological implications" (Cullingworth 1960 p77).

"The lives of a very large number of people have been or will be deeply affected by all this clearance and rehousing activity" (MHLG 1970b p1).

"The wider cultural and political significance of the massive transformation in working class life wrought by slum clearance and suburbanisation has barely begun to be explored" (Jones 2010a p513).



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Did slum clearance 'break up
communities'?

If so, did this override other effects of the
programme for residents?

What does existing evidence say?



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Family and Kinship in East London, Young and Willmott, 1957

Key source for the 'breaking up communities' thesis:

"very few people wish to leave the East End. They are attached to Mum and Dad, to the markets, to the pubs and settlement, to Club Row and the London Hospital" (Young and Willmott 1957 p155).

An influential study:

"Our book was well-received. Extracts were published in the newspapers, the sales were a record for a sociological study, government ministers quoted us" (Young and Willmott 1990 pxvii).

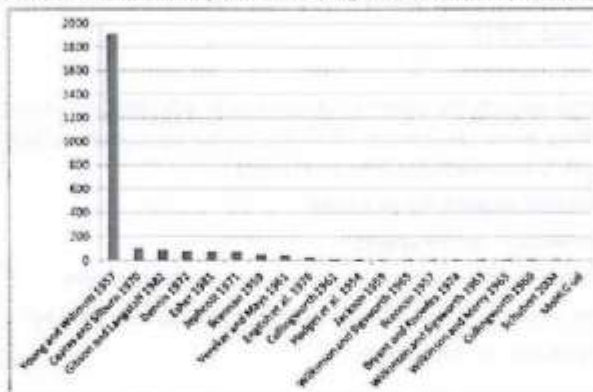


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By far the most quoted of all slum clearance studies...

Number of citations of key studies in Google Scholar, as of October 2012.



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However, it has weaknesses...

Cautions from authors themselves:

- Conclusions were *"bound to be impressionistic"* (1990 p122), because in 'Greenleigh' they talked to 47 households, only families with 2+ kids, not randomly selected (and had not all moved through slum clearance).
- Cullingworth noted this point *"has been consistently ignored"* (1960 p78).

And later re-interpretation from authors:

- Greenleigh in the 1980s was unlikely to be *"a reborn version"* of Bethnal Green in the 1950s
- But *"in general we were too gloomy about the future of such new places in the suburbs"* (1990 pxxii).



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Our research

AHRC funded, 2012

- 1) Formal search for existing studies with information about whether slum clearance 1955-85 'broke up communities', and people's experiences and reactions
- 2) Additional search for sources
- 3) Consultation with experts
- 4) Exploration of oral history sources and newspapers
- 5) Presentation of preliminary results to study day (today)
- 6) Completion in November



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Available evidence

- Very few relevant, good quality studies
- Low thousands of people interviewed about a process that affected millions
- Results vary by place, time, people - need to be cautious about generalising
- Few studies from smaller towns



The key studies

Tracking study - talking to people before and after moves

- MHLG 1970a, b - St. Mary's in Oldham to Oldham Corp estates, 1963-1964/65 - 132 households before, 335 after, 63 both



'Before' studies - talking to people in clearance areas before the move (with their expectations of new area)

- Brennan 1957 - households in the Gorbals, Glasgow
- Vereker and Mays 1961 - 574 households in Crown Street, Liverpool
- Dennis et al. 1970 - up to 688 in central Sunderland
- Wilkinson and Sigsworth 1972 - 3,370 in slum and 'twilight' areas in Leeds, Batley and York
- English et al. 1976 - 1,025 in CPO'd areas in Newcastle, Liverpool, Tower Hamlets, Leeds, Manchester and 10 smaller areas



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'After studies' - talking to people in new sites after move (not all via clearance; with their recall of old area)

- Young and Willmott 1957 - 47 households who moved from Bethnal Green to 'Greenleigh'
- Hole 1959 - 88 who moved within Motherwell and Wishaw, with follow-up over a year
- Cullingworth 1960 - 250 who moved from Salford to Worsley
- Cullingworth 1961 - 161 who moved from London to Swindon
- Jephcott 1972 - who moved within Glasgow to high rise homes

There are more studies of movers to new estates, expanded towns, New Towns; the above involve at least many slum cleared residents and contain recall

Others eg talking to people in slum areas and new sites in the same city

- Mogeley 1955 - 30 in slum area in Oxford and 30 in new estate (not necessarily all cleared)



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Have we missed any potentially relevant studies?



The key findings

- 1) Available evidence suggests that slum clearance 1955-85 'broke up communities' in the sense that:
 - It forced people to move
 - After the move, the neighbourhood population was more geographically dispersed
 - People generally had fewer relatives and friends living within the new neighbourhood than the old neighbourhood



We need to be cautious about generalising.

2) However, existing evidence suggests that in places studied, for most people this 'breaking up' communities effect:

- Was less important than other positives and other negatives
- Did not outweigh the home and neighbourhood benefits most people got from moves
- For some people it was a positive.

So Young and Willmott were 'too gloomy' even in 1957.



'Before' studies: What was residents' overall assessment of the forthcoming compulsory move?

- 17% wanted to leave St. Mary's, Oldham (MHLG 1970a, b)
- 39% of households wanted to leave Crown Street, Liverpool (Vereker and Mays 1961)
- 60% did not want to leave the Gorbals (Brennan 1957)
- Over half wanted to leave St. Ann's, Nottingham (Coates and Silburn 1970)
- 53% in favour of clearance in central Sunderland (Dennis 1970)
- 57% in favour of clearance in central Sunderland (Dennis 1972)
- 64% wanted to move in York (Wilkinson and Sigsworth 1972)
- 67% wanted to move in Balley (Wilkinson and Sigsworth 1972)
- 72% wanted to move in Leeds (Wilkinson and Sigsworth 1972)
- 82% wanted to leave Leeds (Wilkinson and Sigsworth 1963)



51% were in favour of moving from 15 CPO'd areas, 28% were in favour with some reservations, and 21% were against

- 44% were in favour in smaller areas
- 54% were in favour in Tower Hamlets
- 55% were in favour in Leeds
- 59% were in favour in Liverpool
- 60% were in favour in Newcastle
- 63% were in favour in Manchester (English et al. 1976)

Home and household type make a difference:

"80 per cent of young married households renting houses in poor condition were in favour of moving... three quarters of older households owning a good house were against" (English et al. 1976 p194).

The exact question asked makes a difference:

- 70% looking forward to living in a different place
- 63% agreed with council's plans
- 51% in favour of moving (English et al. 1976)



'After' studies: What was residents' overall assessment of the actual move?

Rarely asked.

45% of those who left St. Mary's, Oldham were pleased to have left, 21% had mixed feelings, and 34% were sorry to have left (MHLG 1970b).

Of the 63 households interviewed before and after, *"most of those who had not wanted to leave St. Mary's now preferred their present estates"* (MHLG 1970b p19).



Did clearance areas contain established, valued social networks?

Yes.

"People in St. Mary's were gregarious: they met frequently and chatted in the local shops, the streets, the common yards and on the doorsteps. There was a high degree of social recognition" (MHLG 1970a p26).

But.

"The social life of the slums is not necessarily a precious flower to be preserved and transplanted" (Cullingworth 1960 p94).



- Kin relations appear to be more important than friends, neighbours.
- Limited evidence of 'essential' mutual aid.
- Kin and friendship networks extended outside the neighbourhood.
- Closeness to friends and relations may not have been chosen. Friends/acquaintances may not have been chosen.

"The strong tendency of the Salford families to live in close proximity to each other was... often due simply to the fact that relatives were able to 'speak for' the young wife [with potential landlords]" (Cullingworth 1960 p88).

- Some people disliked being close to relatives and/or disliked some of their neighbours



How far did people move?

In general, people were rehoused by the council within the same council area - a distance of at most a few miles, but outside the original neighbourhood and generally further from the town centre.

Max distance in key studies:

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------|
| • Mogey 1955 | 2 miles |
| • Young and Willmott 1957 | 20 miles |
| • Hole 1959 | 4 miles |
| • Cullingworth 1960 | 8 miles |
| • Cullingworth 1961 | 80 miles |
| • MHLG 1970b | 2.5 miles |
| • Coates and Silburn 1970 | within LA |
| • Jephcott 1972 | within LA |
| • English et al. 1970 | within LA |



Did movers choose their destination neighbourhoods?

Those who moved to LA homes had some choice of homes/neighbourhoods - often more than new tenants and transfers:

- Oldham - 4 offers; 63% got 1st choice area (MHLG 1970b).
- Newcastle, Liverpool - unlimited offers (English et al. 1970)
- Manchester, Tower Hamlets - 3 offers (English et al. 1970).
- Leeds - 1-2 offers (English et al. 1970).



If so, did they choose to be close to friends and relations?

Young and Willmott 1957 -

"Peoples' views about living close to their parents are not their sole thought; their views about bathrooms and hotwater, flats and gardens also count" (1990 p42).

Other studies suggest it was in fact a minor thought.

- For 21% of married people under 45, and 17% 45-59 the main reason for neighbourhood choice was to be near 'family and friends'. For 44% under 45, 58% 45-59 the main reason for choice was to be near 'work, shops etc' (English et al. 1970)
- 'Relatives, friends' were less important than rooms, amenities, tenure, location, rent, and health as determinants of attitudes to moving. They acted as a reason to move as well as stay. (Wilkinson and Sigsworth 1972)



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Were the most important friends and family further away after the move?

Yes: Hole 1959 - Before, 58% had had relatives in street/building; after 17% had relatives in new estate, tho 75% knew at least one of the other tenants

Probably: Young and Willmott 1957 - Before, 19% married people had parents in same street/block, 60% had parents in Bethnal Green; After 22% married people had parent/sibling in the estate; and additional 12% had other relatives.

Ambiguous: Cullingworth 1960 - After, 52% of those with living relatives had some in new location (Worseley)

Cullingworth 1961 - After, 42% of those with living relatives had some in new location (Swindon)



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Did people still see them?

Decline:

Before: "*nearly half*" had seen relatives who lived in the area in the past week;

After: 9% of those in LA homes received visits from (any) relatives in past week, 38% of those who rehoused themselves (generally in more central locations) (MHLG 1970a, b)



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Probable decline/ambiguous:

Before, 90% had 'frequent' meetings with kindred and 40% friendly relations with next-door neighbour; after, 30% had 'frequent' meetings with kindred, 80% friendly relations with next-door neighbour; more said estate than old area was friendly.

"On the housing estate 7 out of every 10 families kept up... meetings with their relatives. The proportions of families who reported infrequent meetings is however significantly greater" (Mogey 1955 p126).

Before: Wives (with children) saw mothers on average 4 x a week; After: Wives (with children) saw mothers on average 4 x a week (Young and Willmott 1957)

"Sudden break in contact with family and friends" (Hole 1959 p164).

No decline:

Mother/daughter contact "*seemed to have changed surprisingly little*" (Cullingworth 1960 p84).



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Did people make new friends after the move?

Little explored.

Some evidence that new neighbourhood networks developed (Bryant and Knowles 1974).

In some cases, some residents appeared to try to avoid reforming social relations on old pattern (eg Hole 1959).



Did residents identify and regret any 'break up of community'?

Yes - a minority.

- *"The sudden break in contact with family and friends caused some distress"* (Hole 1959 p164).
- For 'some' (apparently a minority), the (for some voluntary) move *"resulted in a most unwelcome break-up of kinship ties"* (Cullingworth 1960 p89)
- 30% did not have all their close relatives living in the new area and regretted it. 'Many' had enjoyed the 'anonymity' of London, and craved 'privacy' in their new setting in contrast to the *"personal, intimate life of a relatively small town"* (Cullingworth 1961 p162).
- 28% missed neighbours, friends and relatives (MHLG 1970b)



How important was any 'break up of community' to residents' overall assessment?

Not the most important issue:

Cullingworth 1960 - Separation from extended families

"was for over half the families a matter of no concern. For the majority of the others it was regarded as no more than as a minor incidental disadvantage of suburban life... the overall impression thus different from that gained by Young and Willmott" (1960 p93, 94).

More important for:

Older people, long-term residents

Those who needed or gave care/mutual aid

Those who gained less from new home, neighbourhood

Later clearance?

- Less important as time passed?



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Summary

MHLG's summary of its 1970 study in Oldham appears a fair representation of existing evidence overall:

"Most people from the slums are glad to be provided with a modern home in a better area, but for many the benefits of transferring to one seem, at least in the early stages, to be off-set to some extent by regret at leaving their familiar neighbourhoods and by disappointment at finding that their new estate and district does not have some of the particular advantages of the slum area" (MHLG 1970bp2).



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What next?

Any studies to add?

- A full report of this study, inc. database of research
- Research that goes beyond existing evidence - to archives, oral history and interviews



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Discussion

Lee Crookes – Assumption that people moved but what evidence is there for increased mortality as the strains of the process led to early deaths. Becky replied that there were hints but no evidence of this.

Anne Power- Suggested there was evidence if this in Middlesborough as death rates went up

Becky Tunstall - Child mortality went up as rents were increased beyond affordability.

Anne Power - Noted an increase in Byker Newcastle too. A Newcastle resident also noted that the upheaval is too much for some old people and relocation hastens their demise.

Stuart Lowe- It's long established that older residents are more resistant to removal than younger families and people with children, as the latter wanted a better life and health for their families.

Becky Tunstall - There was a clear difference in the evidence about who wanted to move and who stood to gain. But there was no research on the process, how long it took, the worry and the uncertainties and the impact of the disinvestment prior to removal and demolition.

Anon. - Noted that the rate of car ownership increased during period of study too and so the idea of neighbourhoods changed as communities were not fixed or static, people also have communities of work and not just communities attached to the home.

Becky Tunstall - Yes so it affects people in different times of their lives and society was changing in the background, some people took advantage of opportunity to accelerate these changes and took chance to move.

John Earnshaw- Noted that by late 1950s people were being removed to high rise and deck access innovative architecture, was there anything in the lit that suggested different attitudes to clearance dependent on whether they ended up on these new estates or in traditional streets?

Becky Tunstall -There was some evidence but it was unclear whether the bad experience was the clearance or the architecture.

Newcastle tenants (Anon.) - Clearance was a constant process and there were differences depending on age on how it was experienced, older people concerned with findings new doctors, and younger people finding new schools. There was a tendency for new homes to be built but not new services for these new areas, people had to battle to get bus stops and services and were not involved in the design of these new communities.

'Slum Clearance, Redevelopment and Community: the Leeds experience, 1960-1982' David Ellis, University of York

How does this presentation connect with my wider doctoral work on community action in this period?

My doctoral work seeks to explore the nature of community action in this period, account the development of the movement, and assess its influence on policy making and political culture. Housing and planning issues were major concerns for community action groups. From the late 1960s, Leeds City Council encountered widespread resistance to its clearance and redevelopment programme; the opposition movement revolved around grassroots community groups and citywide umbrella organisations. This campaign serves as an excellent case study in community action.

In this presentation, I am chiefly concerned with the extent to which clearance in Leeds broke up settled communities in the 1960s and 1970s. However, my own research is primarily concerned with the local politics of clearance in Leeds, in which the key "actors" were the community action movement, the city council and national government. In this talk, I would like to address (very briefly) the following questions [here my points appear in note form]:

What are the key sources for the historian of clearance and redevelopment in Leeds in this period?

- The availability of local authority material from Leeds in this period is limited: there is no comprehensive collection of departmental papers in the local archive (the West Yorkshire Archives, Leeds). The local archive holds some committee records and Leeds City Council recently made an archival deposit (Nov 2011) which is currently being catalogued, and this contains committee minutes and reports from the period since 1974. A selection of official papers is held in Leeds University and Leeds Metropolitan University libraries. I have also found local authority documents in the private collections of former activists.
- Academic studies. Wilkinson and Sidgsworth (1963) surveyed almost 1000 families in Leeds; Leeds was one of the cities researched for *Slum Clearance* by English, et al (1976).
- The best sources are to be found in the collections of community activists, on which I have drawn heavily. Their collections contain surveys of streets, reports on impact of clearance, newsletters, testimonials from individual residents, correspondence. They were often produced with assistance of sympathetic architects, planners and other professionals so the methodology is often as rigorous as official/academic studies. They contain a mass of local detail unavailable elsewhere.

- The limitations of the sources mean that it is only possible to form general impressions of the impact of clearance on the social fabric of Leeds. It is not possible to quantify its effects or to track the movement of large numbers of families.

How far was the Leeds experience of clearance and redevelopment unusual or unique? And what impact did this have on community?

- Leeds was distinguished by the existence of a massive stock of back-to-back housing. Back-to-backs were built in Leeds in larger numbers and for longer than in any other British city. Though back-to-backs varied considerably in quality, they were considered structurally unfit until the late 1970s and were the chief target of the cities clearance programmes. The extent of back-to-back housing led to ambitious clearance plans.
- Like most major British cities, Leeds first experienced major slum clearance in the 1930s. In Leeds, the local authority was unenthusiastic about clearance and the large-scale programme of the 1930s only began after a popular campaign *in favour* of clearing the slums, and the subsequent election of a local Labour administration.
- Leeds embarked on an innovative improvement programme of older housing, the “Leeds Method” in the 1950s and 1960s, using discretionary grants, which prolonged the life of older housing. This became a model for national policy in the late 1960s. Although this was seen as a temporary measure, it inadvertently demonstrated the viability of older areas of the city. In many areas, it may have preserved community life, too.
- Like many provincial cities, Leeds City Council built many of its housing estates on peripheral sites, which meant that many rehoused families were moved several miles from their original home. Leeds built such estates from the 1930s until the late 1970s (from Seacroft to Holt Park). That said, the city council did also construct many inner city estates, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s, which were often closer to clearance sites.
- Leeds was a large authority geographically from the 1920s onwards (and it was made even larger after reorganisation in 1974) which meant that families could be rehoused over a very wide area.

To what extent did clearance in Leeds break up settled communities?

- A key point which emerges from my research is that community activists argued that clearance had broken up settled communities, which had had an adverse effect on the social fabric of the city, and that *further* clearance would exacerbate the problem. This was one of the foundations of the campaign against clearance.
- It is hard to dispute the fact that on the whole clearing thousands of housing and dispersing the population across the city must have disrupted settled communities

to a significant extent. Households were often housed in different estates and rehoused families would have found it difficult to regroup in large numbers.

- However, many older areas of the city had already experienced significant social change in the decades before clearance [see *Wider Considerations*] so communities were not always entirely “settled” at the point of clearance.
- Variation by locality. Certain areas e.g. Woodhouse, Stourton, Hunslet and Armley appear to be more “settled” than others e.g. Burley, Hyde Park, Harehills and Chapeltown – these districts were reception areas for commonwealth immigrants and the first two contained large student populations after the expansion of higher education in the city.
- Disruption to settled communities was accelerated by the planning blight which affected areas in the clearance programme, which were often inserted into the rolling programme years (or even decades) before they were due to be cleared. Many families chose to leave blighted areas due to falling standards of maintenance and the proximity to other demolition sites. Blight affected many areas which were not, in the end, cleared.
- An important qualifier in the Leeds case is that planning blight was attenuated in some areas due to the “Leeds Method” of housing improvement which prolonged the lifespan of houses and thus communities (though in some cases the benefits of improvement were reversed when improved streets were represented in the clearance programme).
- Initially, the city council prioritised sanitary, consumer and economic imperatives over preserving communities. Over the 1970s, Leeds City Council was gradually persuaded that existing clearance policies disrupted settled communities and implemented pre-allocation policies, which allocated new housing on cleared sites to former residents of demolished houses. This had varying degrees of success due to the time lag between clearance and new building. Some communities, or parts of some communities, were preserved by this policy.
- It is important to remember that one weakness of the community action campaign against clearance was that communities were often divided on the issue so there was rarely a truly united front against the council. Many households welcomed clearance because it offered them a chance to improve their housing conditions considerably. These attitudes were revealed in community groups’ own surveys, as well as in academic work. Sometimes, as the “battle” against clearance wore on and the area became increasingly blighted, many households changed their attitude to clearance and became in favour (in Leeds, this happened in Stourton).

Wider considerations

- Communities were already changing in this period due to a range of factors including (but not limited to): the effects of post-war “affluence” and rising real incomes; housing mobility due to the expansion of council house building and the general

needs waiting list; commonwealth immigration; expansion of higher education; rising expectations of space and standards in housing; changing attitudes to older people and living with relatives; internal migration within the UK due to declining industries (e.g. mining in County Durham).

- The result was that many young working class families in secure skilled or semi-skilled employment chose to leave older urban areas from the 1950s onwards for new (often suburban) council estates (or occasionally to purchase private housing). Greater employment mobility meant that many left to take up jobs in other cities. These outgoing households were often replaced by commonwealth immigrants, students and young single people. Of course many elderly residents and poorer families remained. The result was that many communities were not “settled” at the point of clearance. Thus, in a period of exceptional social and geographical mobility, communities would have changed in this period regardless of clearance. Leeds was no exception.
- The disruption to communities was not the *only* argument used by the community action movement: they also argued that older urban areas fulfilled an important social and economic function in providing cheap and flexible housing options, close to employment and shopping facilities, which was useful for certain social groups (e.g. the elderly, the poor, recent immigrants, students, people leading alternative lifestyles). This was a tacit acceptance that older areas did not always contain “settled” communities - though this did not mean they did not contain communities of another kind.

How should community be defined in the context of clearance and redevelopment?

- There are problems with focusing on “settled” communities.
- Although communities were often rapidly changing in this period, community loyalties and social bonds formed relatively quickly in older areas of dense housing with limited private space. Newcomers were often rapidly accommodated into what remained of the existing communities. These communal bonds were often strengthened by the threat of clearance and redevelopment, which brought certain communities closer together to resist it. Communities could therefore be close even if they were not strictly old or “settled.”
- The community action groups which fought clearance were sometimes based on communities of interest or geographical proximity. Were these sorts of communities any less valuable than communities based on kinships or historic bonds?
- The rhetoric of community was used widely in this period by different groups of people; it meant different things to different households. It is therefore unlikely that historians will ever agree on a single definition of community – and probably undesirable, too.

Housing demolition at New Mills in Newcastle in the 1980s - Eileen Fair, Chairperson, New Mills Tenants and Residents Association

Good afternoon, I'm Eileen Fair, chairperson of New Mills Tenants and Residents Association, which is in the Westgate ward of Newcastle bordering St James Park the home of Newcastle United. I have been involved in various ways in my estate for over 30 years, campaigning for better services and facilities and in particular community services for everyone and education facilities for our children and young people.

New Mills estate was built in the mid 1970s by Newcastle City Council, to replace a large number of terraced housing mainly flats. Many of the properties were run down with no inside toilets or baths; they were damp and quite small. There were a few large families living in cramped conditions but we were fond of our estate and the community pulled together in good and bad times.

Not everyone was happy with the thought of losing the homes they had lived in for, in some cases a long time, but the community spirit that was in the area kicked in with the help of community workers from the Community Development Project, we formed ourselves into groups and insisted in being involved in all aspects of the new estate.

Our demands guaranteed, we met with planners and architects in a series of meetings and had a say in every aspect of the new build from housing types to layout of the estate. We also had the choice of picking who our neighbours would be or not as the case may be.

In order for demolition to begin a number of families were moved to another newly built estate about ½ mile away at St Pauls. They were joined by more tenants when a mistake by the builders meant they couldn't move in to their allocated homes. The new houses were built facing the wrong way and the inside layout had to be demolished and rebuild.

The rest of the build went well with the tenants watching and waiting for their new homes. Although we now had a split community with people living on two estates I think being involved in the decision making from the beginning helped to keep the community spirit alive on both estates

We were lucky in New Mills because the community got support from the development officers who worked hard to ensure the community was galvanised towards rebuilding the estate and keeping all of us together. This was the beginning of Newcastle Tenants Federation, that has been there to ensure "us" tenants are involved in influencing what regeneration options are laid before us.

'Housing demolition in Scotswood in Newcastle from the 1950s to the 1990s' - Connie Scott, Newcastle Tenants and Residents Federation (Founder member)

Good afternoon---, my name is Connie Scott from Newcastle Tenants and Residents Federation. I have been a community activist for over 35 years and founder member of the Federation.

I was born in a one (1) bedroomed Tyneside flat in 1947 off Scotswood Road in Newcastle upon Tyne with an outside toilet. Like many other families parents and children had to sleep in the same room. There was no electricity, only gas and no hot water, but people were happy and they looked out for each other, you knew everyone in the street. Parents and children played games in the street on summer nights and during the school holidays; there was a good community spirit.

The council decided to demolish the estate in 1957 and the community was split up. The council offered my parents a four bedroom maisonette with a separate bathroom and toilet, electricity and gas, and hot water in a five storey block on an estate called Noble Street. We thought we had died and gone to heaven, the downside for us was that other residents in the street were given tenancies in estates on the outskirts of the city which split the community up.

The blocks of flats were new, there were about fourteen blocks built in a small area with very little space to play. The design was poor as there were one bedroom flats on the ground floor with three bedroom maisonettes above; there was a four bedroom maisonette on each end of the landing. The landing above had three bedroom maisonettes with a five bedroom maisonette at each end of the landing and a lot of children lived in this small area. We had to change schools and make new friends; it was difficult for smaller children to play as their parents would not let them come down all the stairs. A community developed, but it was not like the one I had grown up in. We made new friends and another community developed nevertheless.

Over the years our dream became a nightmare, the flats became unpopular and difficult to let during the late Sixties (1960s). There were no lifts, babies and prams and shopping had to be carried up the stairs. The coalman charged extra to take the coal up; if the tenant could not afford the extra money they would have had to get the coal watched while they took it up a bucket at a time.

We started a campaign to have everyone moved out and the flats pulled down, as the previous had failed due to the council moving the main agitators. The committee agreed if they were moved they would continue to attend meetings until the blocks were demolished. During the campaign it came to light that the flats had been referred to as slums on the drawing board which raised the question, why were they built in the first

place. Our campaign, which ran into the Seventies (1970s), was a success and the flats were demolished in the Eighties (1980s) but another community was dispersed around the city. I moved to the estate above Noble Street when I was rehoused to Loadman Street. It had an established community. I started a tenants group to look at problems on that estate which was also badly designed and poorly built. Loadman Street was pulled down in the late Nineties (1990s).

In 1977 I joined the Federation to add my voice to a growing voice of dissatisfaction among tenants, to what I felt was bad planning policies and poor consultation and total disregard of communities. I was not alone and other tenants joined and there the Federation was born. The Federation has acted as an anchor for the community of tenants and a coordinated voice for tenants and residents groups in Newcastle. Through the Fed, we got training, support and advice as we worked through our tactics to face the Council bosses and politicians to demand better rights. For the last 35 years, through the Federation we have made involvement a reality for many tenants.

Looking back, it seems to me planners and policy makers did not consider the needs of the community when they drew up their plans. Surely new estates should provide a variety of housing for single people, couples and families, with bungalows for the disabled and elderly to enable people access to housing which addresses their needs throughout their lives and enables them to stay in their own community while releasing family homes. This would keep the community together and may help solve some of the problems communities face today.

‘The demolition of housing and the destruction of communities: Shieldfield in Newcastle in the 1950s’ - Ian Carmichael, Newcastle Tenants and Residents Federation

There are many different types of communities. People living in the same area with similar aspirations form some, some are groups of people with a common purpose, some are formed by people with a common problem and need to form a coalition. But the real community is formed amongst people with a common bond.

The community I would like to talk about today was formed in adversity between the middle of the eighteenth century and the middle of the twentieth century. This community was house in an area of Newcastle, just east of the city centre and north of the river Tyne. The area is called Shieldfield. At it’s peak just before the Second World War the area consisted of around 2500 dwelling places. It was built up, from a rural area, into an industrial housing area to accommodate workers employed in the ship building yards and engineering factories on the north bank of the Tyne. Over the year’s family, work colleges and friends closely bonded the community. They lived together, loved together, fought together through two world wars and the great depression. They all lived the same lives, were in the same boat, an original big society.

I would class a community as being caring, looking after each other, sharing whatever they had, helping each other in times of hardship or tragedy. In the community of Shieldfield no one ever died and lay for weeks before being discovered. If someone was missed, only, for a few hours someone was sure to make enquiries. Someone who was ill wasn’t left to suffer on their own, the community would gather round and give whatever help they could. When baby delivery times came, all the neighbours gathered around to help, this was before the formation of the NHS and midwives or doctors were expensive, men folk were dispatched to the nearest hostelry and women got on with the job. The midwife was only called in the case of an emergency or to check that all was in order after the event. This was a true community.

Housing in Shieldfield, I must admit was, for the want of another word, quaint. Built between the mid eighteenth century and the beginning of the 20th century. There were many streets, which contained rows of terraced houses with backyards and very narrow back lanes between them. Precious few had running hot water, baths or inside toilets. Most only had a water tap in the backyard. Life was crowded and hard. Mondays was when all the washing was done, by hand of course, and hung out to dry in the back lanes. Deliverymen, with their horse and carts were banned from the area and woe betides anyone trying to deliver on a Monday. Wednesday was bread-making day and the smell of baking covered the whole area. Friday was payday and the expectations of a jolly night in one of the many hostelries abounded in Shieldfield. Altogether it was a happy, safe environment for a young

boy to be raised in. Everything that anyone needed was in the area, shops, schools, churches, parks, a cinema, eighteen pubs and two fish and chip shops.

There was also another side of the housing in Shieldfield. These were the three and four story tenements. For those who are too young to remember tenements, they were three or four story buildings, which normally formed a square with a central inner area called a quadrangle. The tenements were separated into separate buildings whilst still being joined together by a covered passage from street to the quadrangle. On each side of the covered passage were stone steps leading up to two or three landings on each landing there were two flats. These flats had either one or two bedrooms and a sitting room the sitting room would normally have a gas cooker in one corner with maybe a larder. A coal fire was situated on the main wall. This was normally a large black cast iron range with a hot water boiler on one side a small oven on the other and a grate to hold a kettle in the center. All heated by the coal fire. A few pieces of furniture adorned the area in front of the window and in the other corner was normally a double bed. In the bedroom, normally reserved for the parents, would be a double bed and possibly a couple of single beds. It was not unusual for families of up to ten people to live in a tenement flat. Living in a tenement was entirely different than living in a normal house. To live in a tenement all tenants within your side had to work together. A rota to scrub the stone stairs, to keep the passage clean and scrubbed, to ensure all the lights, gas in those days, within your area were clean and working. Cooperation and a community spirit could only accomplish all this, as it was all hard backbreaking work.

When you hear that no one ever locked their front doors in these communities because we all trusted our neighbours. This isn't strictly true. It was because the front door keys were so large you couldn't carry them around with you and everyone knew where you had left your key. So locking the door was futile. Also there wasn't anything in the houses to steal as everyone was in the same position. The most anyone could steal would be next weeks rent, a couple of bob, on the mantelpiece. The 10th commandment was observed out of circumstances and not out of religious significance. The 10th commandment can be found in religious writings for those who are not familiar with it.

So the community of Shieldfield was formed out of those people with a common bond. It flourished for many years without any help except from inside. Then came the slum clearance orders in the middle 1950's. Shieldfield was designated a slum clearance area, one of many in Newcastle at the time. Large new estates were built in the outer west, north and to a lesser extent east of the city. These estates were modern, clean, with hot running water, baths, kitchens, inside toilets, more bedrooms than the average family could fill, gardens front and rear with areas to grow your own vegetables etc. The only problem they were built on greenfield sites on the outer edges of the city and were to be populated by inner city dwellers. There were transport problems for people getting to work, children

getting to school, mothers to go shopping. In Newcastle this wasn't fully addressed until a number of years after the great exodus.

In Shieldfield there commenced, in 1955 the first phase of the demolition and the community started its' slow but inevitable demise. Friends and neighbours were separated and spread across the outer west and north of the city and this continued at a pace until the late sixties Other parts of the city were also suffering the same fate, Walker, Benwell, Scotswood, Sandyford, Byker, Battlefield, Elswick and others long forgotten. The council did however; start to rebuild on these sites, mainly multi story flats and some folks did return from the outer city to repopulate the areas. But it was a little too late and the community spirit had all but vanished.

It has slowly returned over the intervening years due to the stalwart efforts of those people involved and took a great leap with the formation of the Newcastle Tenants Federation in 1975 and the successive formation of independent, affiliated tenant and resident groups throughout the city numbering 84 at the last count. So the community spirit is slowly coming to fruition once again and I wonder what the future will hold.

The other day I saw brightness on the horizon. I was chatting to a colleague about this conference and this presentation and they mentioned to me, that a community of elderly bungalows were due for demolition and the elderly residents were to be relocated. However the residents were relocated in a nearby, recently refurbished, small block of flats. All the community were allocated flats, were they were requested, next door to the neighbours on either side. So maybe the planners have learnt the lessons of history and we can look forward to a brighter future for communities and those who live in them.

'Housing demolition in Benwell in Newcastle in the 1970s' - Elizabeth Stephenson, Central Walker Tenants and Residents Association

My name is Elizabeth Stephenson; I live in Newcastle upon Tyne, Walker ward which is in the East End of the City. I have been a community activist and member of Newcastle Tenants and Residents Federation since 2009.

I moved to Benwell, which is in Newcastle West End, in 1972 when my son was about six months old. We had been living with my husband's parents, so it was not ideal. We thought this was just great to get our first home of our own. The houses we moved to were very old most of them were flats, we got a three bedroomed flat and it was quite big compared to where I now live. The flats were all owned by private landlords and by today's rent they were very cheap, I think it was about two pounds a week, it had an outside toilet and no bathroom but it was ours and we did the best we could to decorate and furnish it. We quickly made friends with all the neighbours and everyone helped each other out, my sister lived in the same street and my brother lived in the next street away from us, the community was fantastic you could go to the local shops and you would just know everyone you met. We had a local school although my son was still a baby I knew that it was a very good school. We had a good and very reliable bus service and there was always something going on for the local children and the parents in the community. In 1974 I had a little girl and was still happy living there, my neighbours were there for us as we were there for them if they needed us we all rallied around if someone needed help. In the late September we received a letter from the landlord telling us that the property we lived in was under the Compulsory Purchase Order and the houses were going to come down. This news hit the community hard as the thought of moving to somewhere different and leaving friends and family behind was difficult to come to terms with, but what could I do, I had my family to think of and we were given a three bedroomed house in Scotswood. We did not get any money to help us with decorating as we moved just before the deadline so we had to pay for things our selves. The new house was nice enough and more modern, we did get a very nice neighbour but we did not like it in Scotswood. There was a lot of crime and very little community spirit especially to outsiders which I was .I felt very lonely having had my sister and brother close by, I was isolated, lonely and often anxious. In September 1976 my son was to start school, this one was not as good as the one we left in Benwell and it was further away from my home. Sadly just one week into him starting school I tragically lost my husband in a car accident, he was only twenty one. I was left alone in a not so nice a place to live with two children and there was no one to talk. So you see families, individuals and communities do break up and suffer emotionally, financially and socially from the consequences of demolition. Because unlike houses that are purely bricks and mortar, communities and homes aren't, it takes year of dedication and hard work to develop strong community bonds and relationships, and this is why our neighbourhoods are not the same any more. Building new houses and estates is all good and well but for me the demolition of

my flats separated me from the community and family networks that I relied on as a young mother as a safety net, a source of information, childcare, and often sharing a cuppa at each other house was a great stress relieve.

Discussion

There were brief comments about communities being different.

Anne Power - What impact the most recent growing for growth strategy of Newcastle council had on communities? for which there wasn't an answer.

Anon. - Policymakers forget that houses are homes and are too concerned with detail and design.

Johnathan Brown - This chimes with their experience but not with Becky's evidence. Dangerous to draw conclusions that things not that bad as folk make out, it would be a dereliction of duty of academics and policymakers as clearance is still damaging.

'Housing demolition in Islington in London in the 1970s: Up with the houses, down with the slums'¹, Pete Redman, Housing Futures

These notes are a contribution to the York seminar on "Breaking up communities?" on 2 Nov 2012. I do not attempt to cover all aspects of demolition and renovation programmes but aim to shed light on a few often unrepresented facets. They are based on my experience as a housing assistant in the London Borough of Islington between 1974 and 1976 where I visited and rehoused over 1,000 households from slum clearance areas, portfolios of street properties and Housing Action Areas. In my career, leading inner city housing organisations in London, Leeds and Birmingham, I have been responsible for the supply of nearly 20,000 dwellings of all tenures. Almost all of these were provided on former housing sites, some of which were built as recently as the late 1970s, themselves on former housing sites. There are many lessons still to learn about the most sensitive and effective ways to undertake housing renewal, not least the poor management practices that often lead otherwise sound buildings to become unwanted. Perhaps the most striking lesson from my responsibility for managing the Aylesbury, Heygate and Elmington estates in Southwark, 18 months ago, is the sheer, unpredicted, financial cost of the pre-demolition phases; a cost which is ultimately met by reduced services to tenants of other estates. But for now I will concentrate on my experiences as a 22 year old visitor in the slums and appalling housing of Islington.

The first most striking observation is that the destruction of so many homes and neighbourhoods was only partly for future housing purposes. Nearly half the houses we demolished were for creating open space, new schools, and road schemes. My recent analysis of net housing stock additions from 1939 in England for IPPR showed that for about 1m homes demolished in slum clearance areas between 1945 and 1985, another 1m homes were demolished for road schemes, shopping centres, and other grand plans.

The second observation bears on notions of community. One's sense of community is a multilayered entity. School friends, relatives, work colleagues, church congregations and indeed neighbours all to a greater or lesser degree create an individual's community, with sometimes very loose attachments to the dwelling or place. All those I rehoused from slum clearance areas wanted out. The bulldozer was welcomed. It provided the "ticket" out of poor housing and the priority for the best offers of council housing. In fact almost all were allocated housing according to their preferences including moves to estates in other boroughs, and to the new and expanding towns such as Peterborough and Thurrock. In order of frequency the preferences were to be near:

1. Relatives

¹ Labour party campaign slogan 1930's.

2. Work
3. School
4. Church
5. Friends, and lastly
6. Neighbours.

Most relatives, work, schools, churches and friends were not in the immediate neighbourhood. Many actively wanted to move their children from the local school as much as they wanted to move to a better home.

This was my experience of people in slum clearance areas. They were mostly controlled tenancies, a point I'll come back to later. And slums they were. Buildings were "shot", small roomed with ceilings sometimes less than 6ft high, frontages of no more than 10ft, little outside space and the usual stories of shared outside WC, cookers on the landing and no electricity supply. Dampness was prevalent. Some walls so much so, that the wallpaper wrinkled and moved as you looked at it, from the maggots beneath feeding on the wet timber embedded in the wall, horsehair in the lime plaster, and the glue and paper itself. In true Octavia Hill style we scored each household's home management standard, and about once a week, recognising the humiliation caused, had to order the fumigation of rooms and disinfection of people.

Of course the number of slums left to tackle was reducing fast by 1974 and yet we had a powerful well-honed slum clearance machine. It had been running for over 25 years. We could identify areas of housing as poor, and put a paper in confidence to the council committee for a decision, in about six weeks. Within three months the area was decanted and cleared. As more and more "sound" buildings were swept up in the clearance designations this machine needed some brakes. They came in unexpected ways, to which I will now turn.

One notable impression I had was that Civic Trust and Save our Heritage campaigners were often people who had bought in at very low price, after designation, to areas destined for much needed open space. They had more than an amenity gain when their campaign, to stop the demolition process just outside their front door, succeeded. The densely built local area had to put up with less open space.

My third observation was the unintended and unreported effects of the Counter Inflation Acts of 1972, 1973, and 1974. The inflation of the 1970s was dramatic – prices more than doubled in the five years from 1972. Government used many heavy handed measures such as unpopular wage restraint. Rents of council, housing association, and mostly low income private tenancies were frozen initially for six months, then for three years, until phased increases were allowed (Housing Act 1974). One under-researched effect was to create a

marked differential, for the first time, between social housing and market rents. This and the Housing Homeless Persons Act of 1977 were the main, pre-Thatcher, drivers of the residualisation of the sector. By the end of the 1970s, and reinforced ever since, council housing moved from being desired to being housing of last resort. The other main effect was to sound the death knell for the viability of large institutional and landed gentry estates of private tenancies. The decline during decades of rent control had been steady, maintenance was skimped, investment low and the housing was “run down”. It was rarely technically slum housing; though conditions (for people and of property) were poor. Now landlords gave up en masse. When I started at Islington we were buying up, at very low cost, streets at a time. The council moved from responsibility for managing mostly new or recently built estates to become a landlord of whole swathes of Victorian and Georgian terraces and squares. The pendulum, which was already swinging, swung towards housing rehabilitation programmes, including the declaration of Housing Action Areas and an increasing role for Housing Associations.

My fourth observation is that tenants started to get organised about housing conditions , often helped and supported by action groups, community leaders, and even council members and officers. Well organised campaign groups persuaded the council to buy out their rogue landlord or to declare their neighbourhood an Housing Action Area. For example the Pooles Park residents campaigned for the an HAA and then formed their own housing co-operative which rehabilitated and managed their own housing, working with the council and local housing associations. In Stonefield Street, after an aggressive period of attempted winking by the agents of the Cloudesley Estate, the residents persuaded the council to buy up the whole road. I interviewed all 52 households (in 28 houses) on purchase. Almost all had been involved in the campaign; they knew each other; they knew what they wanted. And almost all wanted to stay in the street. We worked together to plan the rehabilitation to meet their needs . By almost any measure you had to describe these as communities committed to a neighbourhood. I would estimate that about 10% to 20% of neighbourhoods had such strong communities by 1976.

My fifth observation is that many tenants from these private sector portfolios were on the newer regulated tenancies or with no security at all, in stark contrast to the controlled tenancies referred to above. These new forms of tenancies were offered to households who represented a much wider spectrum of the population including many immigrant and ethnic minority communities. During the clearance programmes priority for new housing was given to the long standing tenants on controlled tenancies who were, generally speaking, older and whiter. Homeless people and ethnic minorities did not get much access to council housing and, if they did, some filtering took effect – they were offered the less desirable estates. With the need to rehouse people, to enable rehabilitation to get underway, from the newly purchased street properties (where regulated tenancies predominated) this filtering process took hold with a vengeance. It was common knowledge which council estates or neighbourhoods were more popular than others. The local discourse was one of

pecking order of desirability, or fear. Within the council we operated what I can only describe as institutional racism. Files of black households had to be marked with an "X" in pencil prior to passing to the Head of Lettings. Some of us sidetracked this system. For example if people wanted to move out of the Borough we could get an offer for them direct from the New Town or Greater London Council without the need to pass through the filter for allocation to our own estates. People with a western surname made it easier to overlook to mark the file and they fared better. A couple of tenants started to use a middle name as a surname and registered this through deed poll. Three or four years later the pressure for change mounted. Anne Power's investigation hit the BBC TV news. The system changed, some people left the council service, and I am pleased to say the balance of attitude also changed. But for many council estates the nature of their communities had already been set.

So in conclusion I would give caution on generalisations of "breaking up communities". The demolition of neighbourhoods has undoubted negative impact on those adjoining, and on those running local shops and businesses, sometimes reversing on redevelopment. Being moved from your home is at best unsettling, and on occasion I know it caused early death for some of the older residents I rehoused. But communities are of a different and more fluid and less tangible nature. They can be fragile and easily tipped over, or roots travel and they can regrow.

I think there is fruitful ground for further research into the changing nature and social impacts of controlled to regulated tenancies (1950 to 1990), into the strong economic and social consequences of the Counter Inflation Acts on freezing rents in the early 1970s, and for a better understanding of the house building boom years of 1950 to 1979 which after allowing for the houses we demolished led to annual net additions to stock not much different to the average since 1980.

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'Housing demolition in York' - Mark Roodhouse, University of York

(These are notes taken by Alison Wallace on behalf of Mark)

There is new interest in slum clearance, starting with history of the black market and his work moved on to being interested in the communities themselves. Notes a dereliction of duties by historians not examining what happened to these communities and the people involved. Starting point for study of York are the three Rowntree surveys 1901, 1935 and 1951, although the records of the last two are incomplete. But he and his team are tracing families in the city to trace what happened to the people, and reconstitute their family histories. The aim is to trace 30-40 families to determine what the impacts of moving from city centre slums to the edges of the city has been.

Slum clearance forms part of the stories but that there were a lot of other processes happening during the same period. The cleared areas had not necessarily been stable communities. During these periods, massive amount of men were absent at war, and women were working in the factories, population was the most mobile it had been except for today. There is always an assumption that communities are fixed.

‘Moving On or Moving Back? – some milestones in a housing biography’ - Alison Ravetz,

Everyone and every family has a housing biography. Here is part of mine.

My parents started married life in the acute housing shortage after the First World War. They began by renting rooms in the homes of married sisters, before getting a house on an early LCC estate in Essex. My father wasn't a 'returning hero' but he did fit the criterion of upwardly mobile, white collar worker. One reason why they left after a few years was the invasion of new tenants from the slums who despoiled my father's pride and joy, his garden.

Both my parents came from large extended families in the East End of London. Evidently these started to break up spontaneously in the 1920s and the direction of movement was east for my father's family and north for my mother's. Such geography is important for issues of neighbourhood and community, which overlap but aren't quite the same. The point is that people were already dispersing themselves before wholesale slum clearance in the 1930s, and without regrets. To the end of their days, in the 1980s, it was difficult to get my parents to talk about the East End because they could never understand why anybody should be interested in it. They wanted to leave all that poverty behind.

My father bought a house in a respectable but unfashionable district (Crouch End) where I was born. At first he could only just afford the mortgage, so for many years we were hard up. Our shops, school, church were all local. I don't remember anyone taking part in neighbourhood affairs or ever hearing the word 'community'.

For two years of the war we lived in Bournemouth, where my father's office was evacuated. We could take our pick of any number of houses to rent, whose owners had decamped. By the same token, my father had placed our London house in the hands of his newsagent, who promised to take care of it. Rent control made it impossible to get it back when we moved back to London ourselves, so we were forced into renting another house vacated by its owners. It wasn't until the 1950s that my father could repossess the house he owned, on grounds that it was needed by my older sister, who had begun her married life in conditions even worse than my parents after the previous war.

I got married in the early 1950s and for some time we lived in rooms and shared kitchens in other people's houses. My husband's first proper job took us to a tiny cathedral city with a university, where the stock of middle-class housing was very small and there wasn't a hope in hell of a council house, which was strictly for local people with children. Indeed the local definition of council housing was 'housing for councillors'. There may have been some nepotism, but I'm sure the great bulk of it was awarded fairly and was hugely appreciated. I know I would have given my right arm for a council house or flat with mod cons.

We came to rest at last in a tiny slum house in a blind yard behind a plumber's shop. We bought it for £150. It had three rooms, none of which was a bathroom, and there was a

shared WC at the bottom of the yard. Here my oldest child was born. The only thing my GP was concerned about when I asked for a home delivery was whether or not the bedroom had an open grate. It did: that is, it had a fireplace that had been covered over with hardboard, which evidently made it pass. Other sanitary arrangements, or lack of same, were immaterial. I've always looked on this as an interesting postwar survival of Victorian sanitary rules.

When a year or two later we moved to Leeds, it never occurred to us to do other than sell this tiny house, which is proof of our lack of financial *nous*, for it is still standing and must have netted generations of owners a fortune over the years. We belonged to that minority of young upwardly mobile professionals – a small one, no doubt, but it did exist – who didn't believe in or want the owner occupation we were eventually driven into and at first could barely afford. What we really wanted was some sort of cooperative housing, which didn't exist. We took out shares in one project but it came to nothing because of the uncooperativeness of the council. Council housing was still out of the question of course, because you needed to have local roots to qualify.

For several years whenever we moved house, we sold at roughly the same price as we had bought, in spite of all the improvements we had made. Whether this was due to socialist principles or sheer financial incompetence is for readers to decide.

Here are some details about housing standards:

From the time we moved to Leeds we always had an indoor bathroom and WC. Each time we moved we found ourselves putting in power circuits and labour-saving fires (coke or gas) in place of open grates (conversion for smoke control was done by the Council in the mid 1960s). We didn't live in a house with central heating until around 1980 (and after divorce I lost it again in 1984). Each time we moved we needed to make the house serviceable by putting in shelves, cupboards, curtain and towel rails, power points. I stripped and sanded floors, un-flushed 'flushed' doors, stripped any number of layers of wallpaper and gloss paint, and redecorated throughout. I was so busy doing all this while bringing up three children that I didn't have time for anything much outside the home. I don't think the term 'community action' was quite invented yet, and what surplus energy I had went mainly to CND.

You can't really get a fair picture of these times without mentioning the place of women. In the early postwar years there was a very strong ethos which affected you even if you disagreed with it. Every woman was expected to be a fulltime wife and mother at home, with dire threats that if she wasn't, her children were likely to turn into criminals. In our world of academe, if she didn't conform she was disapproved of, and she and her husband risked being ostracised. If she did eventually find some academic work it would be part-time and of inferior status to her husband's. It had no tenure and wasn't counted for pension purposes - so a lot of women of my generation don't fit the 'affluent oldie' stereotype.

Childcare was expensive and extremely hard to find, until the women's movement got active setting up play groups and suchlike around 1970.

To overcome all this a married woman's earnings needed to be high; but as she was a late starter they were only ever going to be low, so it was usually more economic, as well as easier, for her just to stay at home. It was a Catch 22 situation: if she couldn't get a decently paid job the family couldn't have the sort of house that would have enabled her to be a more effective mother as well as a professional.

It's also worth remembering that a wife's earnings, if any, weren't counted for purposes of getting a mortgage (which may or may not have been a good thing) and that a woman wasn't able to buy a house in her own name (or, I think, take a tenancy) without a male guarantor.

I turn to what in the end turned me into a housing professional as well as a consumer of housing. The Quarry Hill Flats Project (1969-71) was a one-off, in that all the tenancy records from the very beginning to the end were lodged in the estate management office on site, and that the city architects could produce voluminous files covering the design, contract and construction. I didn't at first realise how special this was – indeed it was unique and probably impossible to replicate now.

I was given a lot of help but right at the outset everyone, including the Director of Housing for Leeds, was incredulous that anyone should seriously think of researching Quarry Hill. 'Why Quarry Hill?' they demanded: 'We learnt all the lessons of that long ago'. (Yet until a few years before I began work in 1968, there were delegations of foreign architects and housing experts beating a path to the estate). Once properly into the project I saw that none of the lessons had ever been learned (so when Park Hill was being planned for Sheffield in 1957, it evidently didn't occur to anyone to take a train up the line and see what was happening at and to Quarry Hill).

When it comes to 'community' the study revealed many interesting things. For instance it was possible to identify a 'pioneer' effect amongst the first intake of tenants, significant numbers of whom stayed longer than in any subsequent groups. After the estate's total demolition in the mid 1970s, a new and fabricated history came into circulation: namely, that it had 'failed' for social reasons. This was incompatible with the Quarry Hill I had come to know over the three years of my work there. Any failures were more likely to have been between tenants and authority, tenants and tenants (community leaders and rank and file), residents and professional observers (including the media), while the decision to demolish came out of the unequal power relationships between different local authority departments, notably highways, planners and housing managers. So it came about that an estate built to rehouse people from unsanitary and overcrowded slums was demolished after a much shorter life (around 35 years) than those selfsame slums had had.

The story of Quarry Hill Flats hugely informed my own understanding and interpretation of council housing – as for instance when I wrote about Newcastle’s Byker, which was an iconic estate for the 1970s as Quarry Hill Flats had been for the 1930s. It was in many ways the Leeds estate’s successor (I seem to recollect arranging the transfer of Quarry Hill’s May Queen regalia to the Newcastle estate). Its particular innovations were the involvement of tenants in design (the architects worked in full view on the estate, and some of them lived there); advance allocation that allowed people to save up for their new home and to be beside friends and neighbours when they moved in, and certain open-ended features of the design which allowed for future family and community change.

This, then, was one of my major ‘milestones’. Another was Jeremy Sandford’s TV documentary *Cathy Come Home*, which I must have watched around the time I began working at Quarry Hill. This documented how exclusion from the ‘housing ladder’ first ruined the marriage and then tore apart the entire family of two young working-class people. It instantly turned me into a lifelong Shelter supporter and motivated my involvement in community action ever after.

There isn’t the time or space here to discuss how housing history is related to community action so I’ll just assume that readers will agree that it is. My own community action involvement began just as the Quarry Hill work was finishing in the early 1970s. From then, and into the 1980s, there grew up a nationwide movement of opposition to the ‘slum clearance bulldozer’, which physically laid waste vast inner areas of Leeds and other major cities, paralysing them for years with ‘planning blight’ and destroying a stock of older, cheaper housing, for which, we argued, there were continuing and valid social uses. One of the major battlegrounds was Public Health, which was responsible for condemning the houses as ‘unfit to live in’, but denied owners the opportunity to put them right by withholding the reasons for condemning them. This was of course because the local authority wanted to clear and completely redevelop entire swathes of land, in many cases for road improvements. I’m proud to say that the campaign in Leeds had a demonstrable effect on the swing in central government policy in 1975, from wholesale clearance to gradual renewal.

The next phase of community action was in many ways an extension of this (though usually with a break in personnel) from the 1980s and still continuing. Typically, this had a broader agenda in which local history and conservation were often salient. In particularly successful examples it could lead to the production of Neighbourhood Design Statements and community development trusts sponsoring shops, cafés and arts centres. Community participation was now hugely facilitated by the internet, email, word processing and printing (to my surprise, I recently found myself trying to describe to a student what community action was like when we only had duplicators, telephone calls, postage stamps or foot slogging to aid us – even the xerox machine, a huge improvement on duplicating, couldn’t convey messages and announcements. However, we all know that campaigning success is

much likelier in mixed neighbourhoods with lively economies and critical numbers of people with middle-class skills and/or experience of organising. Success is far less likely in deprived neighbourhoods, including outlying council estates, where would-be activists seem doomed to reinvent the wheel over and over again.

Meanwhile there had been some amazing developments in public sector housing, notably the housing co-ops so strong in Liverpool and Coin Street Community Builders in London. I took an interest in these, and in a revolution in the design of public housing (such as Hulme in Manchester) and the widespread devolution of management to tenant bodies. I don't believe that any of this has ever had the follow-up and research it deserves, presumably because it was swamped by party politics and the decimation of council owned housing through the Thatcher, Major and Blair years, not to mention the incredible folly of the boom that went bust in 2007-8.

The situation now is that there are extraordinary problems facing us. There is an alarming shortage of housing, and prices for both renting and buying are such that young people, low income earners and people dependent on benefits are increasingly unable to house themselves and their families. We are still reaping the whirlwind of the right to buy which has decimated public housing and there is a recent and still growing landlord class buying houses as an investment in lieu of pensions. Surely there will be an inevitable increase in the sharing of dwellings, a middle-class version of which has existed for many years in university towns, but which is now going spread more widely under new housing benefit rules: no more than a room in a shared dwelling for under-35s, and no independent housing benefit at all for under 25s.

I have huge concerns about standards. Older housing, including much that was once rescued from the bulldozer, will degenerate further without investment, private or public. We are told to expect a 'bonfire of the building regs', including fire and safety rules, while out go 'lifetime homes' able to accommodate wheelchairs and lifts, and spare rooms for study, working from home, and family expansion, division and amalgamation. People on housing benefit are having it docked if they are deemed to have too many rooms, regardless of their family circumstances. All this looks like reversing many painfully fought for and hard won gains of the last 70-80 years, during which statutory overcrowding shrank to a level that was hardly worth reporting, and the 1961 Parker Morris Report set standards that were never applied in the private sector and never bettered in the public sector. As always, things reach an extreme in London, where my grandson has told me that 'Gumtree' carries adverts for entrance halls to rent in people's houses. Another housing stress for many towns is the virtual takeover of whole neighbourhoods by students who, with their landlords, typically don't make good neighbours.*

* Another housing stress worth noting is that welfare reform has steadily reduced the age of youngest child for lone mothers wishing to claim benefit. It now stands at five years, apparently regardless of family size and whether or not there is any support from the wider family.

All of which makes me wonder where we are going in housing: are we moving forward or moving back? And what will be the consequences for both our private lives and our lives as citizens and social beings? Will the information age empower us, so that together we work towards better neighbourhoods and a more flourishing social order; or will the present retrograde policies prevent this?

Lots of questions; answers still to find.

'Housing demolition in Islington in London in the 1970s, proposed demolition in Birmingham in the 1990s and demolition in Canning Town in London and in Liverpool in the 2000s' - Anne Power, London School of Economics

(These are notes taken by Alison Wallace on behalf of Anne)

Notes insecurities if not a tenant in slum clearance programmes as has no rights. Tells story of Holloway Coop getting rights for minority households who did not have security of tenure and therefore did not have entitlement to be rehoused by the council, and Charteris Road coop in Finsbury Park/Highbury that retained a quality street. And how the council had lied about figures and that the Packington Estate used to be a Georgian square which was not suitable for demolition but was done anyway on the Ministers instructions and had to be rebuilt by London and Quadrant recently. Value of land drives much demolition. Doing work on Canning Town PFI scheme and tracing families. Process take so long that families who are in favour of renewal and look forward to a new home don't see their dreams realised in time for their children to benefit who have already left home by the time anything happens, and areas blighted. Also impact on children reported by teachers as children live with uncertainty for so long. Documented in Slow Death of Great Cities which was shocking. Also noted political gerrymandering.

Sat on Birmingham's housing commission and they had a policy to demolish 2000 social housing homes per year for no reason other than to contribute to repair budget. No regard for communities or what people wanted or even of local demand for housing. Example of Edge Lane in Liverpool where council wanted to build motorway for City of Culture whole neighbourhood eradicated for nothing. Ambition to replace and renew housing good but often doesn't happen and when new housing comes often poor grade, higher rents and unaffordable and insufficient to compensate for impact on families and communities. People want to be near family members and need community stability to achieve this. Enquiry into rate of refusals in Islington clearance programmes took 9 years to publish as it was damning.

Discussion

Ian Carmichael– Experience of Wandsworth council in 1980s clearing local authority estates and selling off to private sector who sold them off and made a profit. AP: thinks Tyneside flats could've been saved or remodelled.

Anon. - Noted ignorant media reports of new supply without reporting that much of this is replacement dwellings not increase in supply.

Anon. - Byker tenants wanted improvements but not moving, could have been done in situ.

Becky Tunstall - Maybe now there is less to gain from slum clearance as most homes have essential amenities anyway, whereas in years past material gains were made in housing conditions.

Johnathan Brown – 'So called' slum areas, insensitively identified as such without consultation of local people.

Alison Ravetz - Definition of slum is physical and has no consideration of the value of the home to people, there are heavy value judgements being made.

Pauline Buck- People may not see themselves as living in a slum. They might be deprived but might not perceive that to be the case.

Jenny Cavanagh – In the past often poor accommodation in private rented sector meant people were rehoused in council homes, but now there is demolition but no replacements at a sufficient rate so people are re-entering private sector, so we are going back in time not forward.

Alison Ravetz - Issues of welfare reform, ending s106 possibly etc, SRR under 35s reintroducing problems we thought we'd abolished. Saw opportunity to sleep in someone's entrance hall advertised on gumtree.

Cameron Scott- Notes problems with the bedroom tax and the impact in areas where no one else wants these houses, and yet there are no places for people to downsize to as councils got rid of one beds, leaving hem £12 pw worse ff. choice heating or eating which will become an NHS health problem.

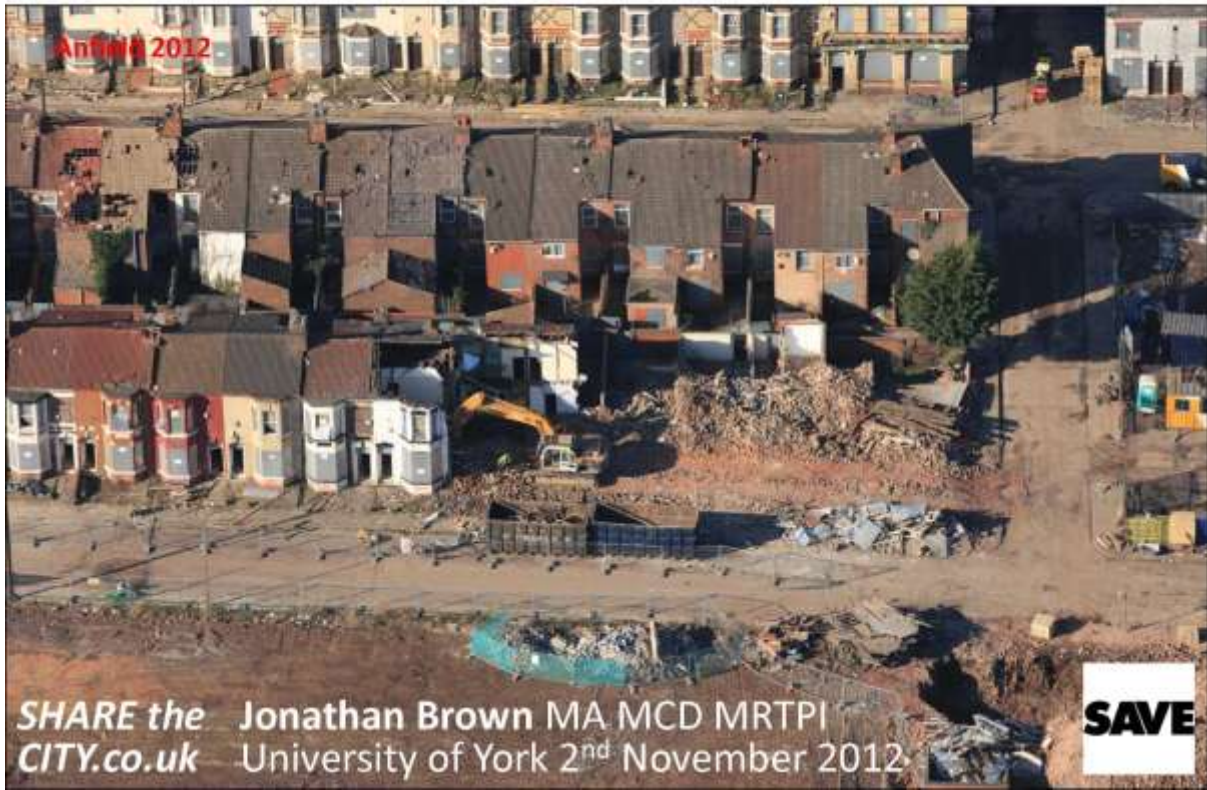
‘Back to the future: Wrecking ball regeneration’ - Jonathan Brown, Save Britain’s Heritage

Jonathan Brown is a chartered Town Planner and city guide for AffinityTours.co.uk. He has assisted local and national groups in promoting sustainable alternatives to neighbourhood demolition, and resisting area clearance under John Prescott's 'Pathfinder' programme. Among many written articles and letters, Jonathan wrote the influential 'Post-Mortem' of Pathfinder for SAVE Britain's Heritage, which has been quoted in Parliament by Ministers and in the national press <http://www.savebritainsheritage.org/news/campaign.php?id=191>

Seven brief points:

- Some 400,000 homes were considered for demolition by the 'Northern Way' group, and nine 'Pathfinder' areas designated.
- Between 2003 and 2011, £2.2bn was spent directly, with other public and private funds diverted towards 'Housing Market Renewal'.
- The 15 year programme was unpopular and wound up early. Around 28,000 homes have been demolished, with a further 5,000 currently targeted under 'Transitional' arrangements (recently declared unlawful by Mrs Justice Lang in a successful High Court challenge by SAVE Britain's Heritage).
- Just 12,600 new houses have been built nationwide.
- On Merseyside, £330m was spent directly and 18,000 homes actively targeted for demolition. Following desperate community resistance, the New Heartlands quango (known locally as New Wastelands and New Heartbreak) achieved a much lower number of demolitions. 5,000 homes have been demolished, with 2,000 still boarded up and condemned.
- The effect on communities and individuals has been catastrophic, with some established districts like Edge Hill, Anfield, Bedford Road and Klondyke physically wiped off the map.
- The fear is that the original demolition targets remain latent and mass clearance will return when political and financial circumstances allow.

Back to the Future – Wrecking Ball Regeneration



1966 Housing Strategy: condemned 70% of inner Liverpool

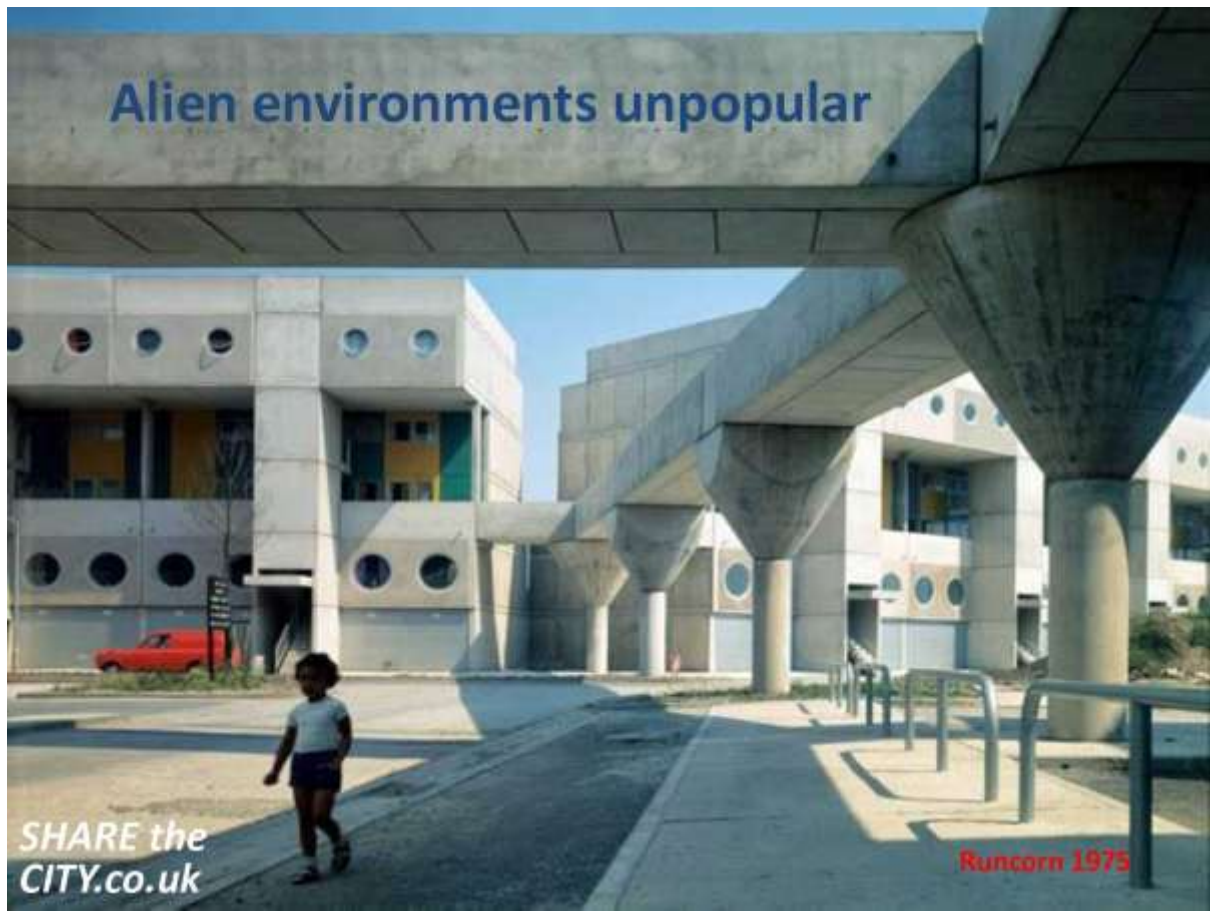


**30% of entire city's housing demolished. 166,000 people 'decanted'
- more fled new high rise 'Piggeries'**



City population halved and economic base collapsed





Counter Revolution – embrace of low density



Revolution: Runcorn c.1975



Counter Revolution: Runcorn c.1995



Pathfinder: £2.2bn, 30,000 demolished, 12,000 new build

New Heartlands: 18,000 homes targeted, 5,000 cleared



Before, 2005

Kelvin Grove, Liverpool 8, Toxteth

*SHARE the
CITY.co.uk*

After, 2012

Kelvin Grove, Liverpool 8, Toxteth

Functioning communities dispersed



*SHARE the
CITY.co.uk*

Voelas St, L8 2005

Local assets devalued



Local heritage destroyed



SHARE the
CITY.co.uk

Wanda Ford Bootle
2008

Vulnerable residents evicted

Home > News > Liverpool Local News

88-year-old Bootle woman evicted from her home to make way for the bulldozers

by Marc Waddington, Liverpool Echo | Mar 9 2012

Comments (24) Recommend (38)

Recommend 18 Tweet 56 +1 1 Share 1 Share 27 Email Print



Bridget Hogan aged 88, in her new bungalow, after being evicted by the council from her home on Willard

AN 88-YEAR-old woman was evicted from her home after refusing to move to

DP Business Sport Culture Views & Blogs

Street Associates

Edge Lane campaigner Elizabeth Pascoe finally moves out

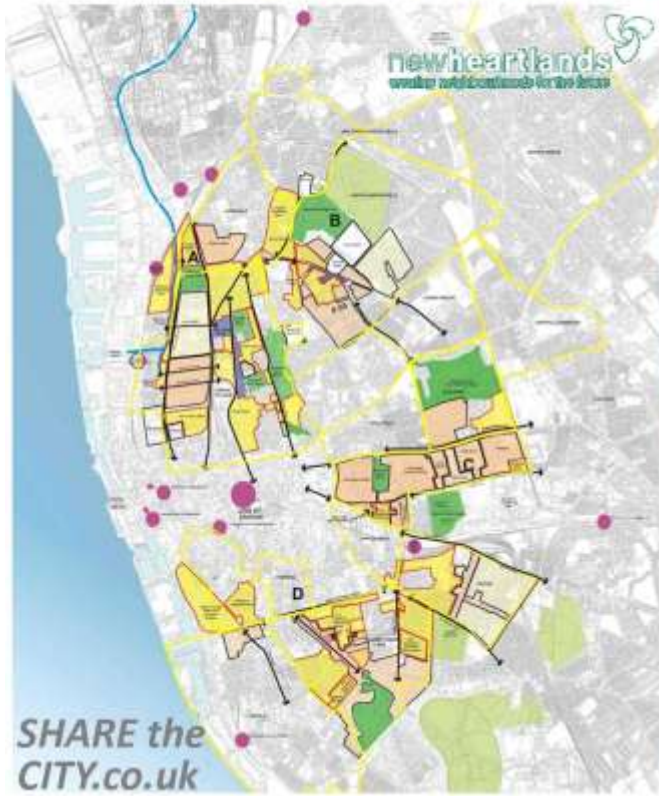
By David Bartlett on Feb 1, 10 01:37PM



Pathfinder Evictions,
2010 - 2012

'Crude, insensitive and wasteful'

Urban Task Force



Evolution: Northmoor Manchester



Evolution: Northmoor Manchester



Moss Side 'Infusion' Miller Homes



Evolution: Chimney Pot Park



Evolution: Chimney Pot Park



**"The making of space and the losing of place:
a critical geography of gentrification by
bulldozer in the north of England"**

Lee Crookes

Dept. of Town and Regional Planning,

University of Sheffield

l.crookes@sheffield.ac.uk

My PhD research ...

- involved multi-site ethnographic case study research on the implementation of housing market renewal (HMR) in Liverpool, Oldham and South Yorkshire
- investigated the processes by which HMR dispossessed people of their homes
 - via a combination of discourse and territorial stigmatisation, attrition, compulsion
- examined 'domicide' and the personal and social impacts of demolition for those displaced by the programme
- re-conceptualised HMR as a form of social harm and CPO as 'theft'

Residents of Tunstall Street, Liverpool, protest against the demolition of their homes, June 2006



Photo: courtesy of Stephen Ord, Smithdown Against Demolition

Hundreds of people's lives are affected by this CPO...For us, the cost is enormous. It takes us all to breaking point and has broken this community and our spirits. It has cost many people their lives or made their last years a misery. It's very hard to explain what it feels like to have this done to you...People have died fighting alongside me. The NDC strategy did talk about reducing the proportion of elderly and low-income people...I just didn't think they would do it like this. I want to tell this Inquiry about who we were. The personal stress, the individual costs and trauma get overlooked. I want to show the cost in human terms... (Liz Pascoe, in evidence to the Edge Lane 2 inquiry, 15 January, 2008)

Comments from interviewees in Oldham

- I've had shingles...another neighbour has. One neighbour who was terminally ill said he just wanted to die. He died at Christmas...
- All the worry is causing serious stress. My husband and I argue much more than we used to. I've got high blood pressure and I worry morning and night.
- You have to spend your time throwing up and crying. Fighting it is pointless.



"To them it's nothing, but to me my house is everything... I'm fighting for my life here"
(Interview with Elijah Debnam, 2007)

Impacts of demolition

- on residents' physical and mental health
 - on their housing conditions
 - on their financial circumstances
 - on informal networks of support
 - on people's ability to live independently
 - on people's attachment to place and their 'life projects'
 - on children's friendships and schooling
 - on community viability
- None of these aspects were examined in the official evaluations of HMR

One of the most effective tactics of neoliberalism involves the statistical disappearance of its costs and victims."

(Wily *et al*, 2010: 2620)

Low-income households are forever subsidising the costs of redevelopment by not being properly compensated. As Herbert Gans argued in the early 1970s:

"...the funds allocated to relocation are less than 5% of the total cost of clearing and taking the land...The real cost of relocation is very much higher, but is paid in various ways by the people being moved out. Under present conditions, the redevelopment of American cities is economically possible only because of the hidden subsidies provided by the residents for the areas to be cleared" (1972: 202)

What is to be done?

- Re-assert 'home' as a site of political struggle and 'resilience'
- Focus on emplacement and the 'right to stay put' rather than displacement
- Emphasise benefits of refurbishment over demolition
- Develop social/ health impact assessment frameworks and conduct more research on displacement and its effects (cf HOPE VI panel study)
- Reassess home loss payments and compensation
- Ensure that stories of loss are heard

Ciara Leeming's 'Streetfighters'

<http://vimeo.com/10193199>

<http://streetfightersproject.wordpress.com/multimedia/audio-portraits/welsh-streets-anti-demolition/>

This two-part short might also be of interest from Bootle, near Liverpool:

<http://vimeo.com/40573748>

<http://vimeo.com/40786166>

'Housing demolition in Redearth, Darwen in the 2000s', Cllr. Simon Huggill, Darwen Town Council

The Redearth triangle in Darwen was subjected to HMR, resulting in a Housing Act CPO, which the Council lost with the inspector stating that their figures were exaggerated, and arguments flawed and recommended that the area used HMR monies to refurbish the houses, and build new where demolition had already taken place. However the Council brought forward a second CPO - a town and Country CPO - which went far as the Appeal court, but the Council got its way, not the least because HM Treasury would not enforce the HMR contract terms. From start to completion the process took some 6 years.

I will detail with the changes in 3 peoples' lives

1. A 30 year old alcoholic and drug user - paid out £4600 compensation - went on a bender, and ended up dead at the bottom of his stairs.
2. A 70 year old, who, with her husband had bought the house in the early 1950's as a just married couple, using his demob money - raised two boys - one into the Navy, other into police force - husband died in the house - she was heart and soul of the community - Aunty X to the children - kept emergency keys for families etc - 'I have lost my whole life' - now she lives in a small rented flat away from town centre, from her friends and community - 'my church is all that keeps me going'. The pay out was not sufficient to buy another house, and she had not got the fight in her to challenge the valuation of the council.
3. A 45 year old who has brought up his daughter after wife ran off - big struggle - but very faithful to his daughter - paid out for his house in a lump sum - approached by agent for flats in Sophia in Bulgaria - goes, has a look - gets conned and loses everything. Now fights alcohol, daughter left home, lost his job, and life far from good

For the last residents to settle, I managed to find an out of town valuer, and in each case, we managed to get financial agreements significantly higher than what had been 'finally offered' by the council. Importantly we achieved a land tribunal ruling against the council. I had the distinct impression that local valuers did not want to run up against the council.

Many ex residents now have mortgages they never wanted - and I meet retired people who are bitter that they are still paying off these new mortgages. Now some 5 years on, two people are still waiting to go to the Land Tribunal.

If we are to return to clearance as we surely must at some stage soon (building willy nilly on greenfield sites in not sustainable- please note Mr Pickles) - we do not have the wealth or income to invest in many of these properties that will be justified on the market price

producing a return, except via poor quality private rent - clearance needs to be taken forward without all this 'uncertainty', pain and long term suffering. I venture that the CPO aspects must be up front at the beginning; that resources are guaranteed not promised over a 15 year period that never runs to 15 years. Most of all, the excessive wastage on Consultants, lawyers etc must be contained. The money should be used to protect communities, not to fleece and damage them.

'Housing demolition in Birmingham, Liverpool, Goole, Hull, Manchester, Middlesbrough and Salford in the 2000s' - John Earnshaw, Lansdown Housing and Regeneration Consultancy

John Earnshaw, FCIH - started his career as a trainee Housing Manager with Mexborough UDC (South Yorkshire) way back in 1964 and has been a housing professional for over 40 years now! John was Area Housing Manager with Barnsley MBC for 20 years and has held a variety of similar management posts with other local authorities and housing associations in the Yorkshire region, before moving to Kirklees MDC in 1997.

His career highlights include winning the Empty Homes Agency's National Award in 2001 for the *'Best Strategy for Tackling Low Demand'* whilst Voids Project Manager at Kirklees MDC and a BBC2 documentary - *'First Sight' and 'Look North'* was made on his innovative marketing strategy. This was based on the successful pioneering Kirklees/Camden housing partnership and was the start of moving people out of London (now LAWN) to Kirklees (Huddersfield, West Yorkshire - *'Last of the Summer Wine Country'*), in the North of England. He also made a significant contribution to the ODPM's *'Empty Property - Unlocking the potential'* implementation handbook, which was published in 2003. He has had several articles published in The Guardian, Housing Today, Independent on Sunday, Inside Housing, London Housing News, Property People and also in the ODPM's 'Signpost' magazine.

John has done housing consultancy work and run several courses, seminars and workshops for BURA, CAPITA, CIH, EHA, HouseMark, HSHC, The Housing Training Company, LGC, Marlow Associates, NAEPP, Novas Scarman Group, NUREC, Sheffield University, SHELTER, South West Empty Homes Forum, TPAS, Urban Forum, the Welsh Assembly Government and the Welsh Federation of Housing Associations on *Marketing Empty Properties, Low Demand and Social Housing* and currently is a consultant for Void Doctor, see - www.void-doctor.org

He has spoken at several national and regional conferences, including the CIH Annual Conference and Exhibition at Harrogate (Lovell Policy Platform) in June 2004. He ran his workshop – *'Making Unattractive Houses into Homes'* at the CIH National Homeless & Lettings Conference (and ran a charity disco for Centrepont, the CIH President's charity) at Harrogate in November 2003. John was invited to submit a paper on Low Demand to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, Social Housing Conference in Vienna on 28th – 30th November 2004. September 2009 'Crime Reduction & Social Housing' presentation to the London Voids Club at Camden Town Hall

Whilst working for the Empty Homes Agency, as Low Demand Project Manager John did several in-house low demand assignments and presentations including, Accent NW, Bradford Community Housing Trust, Canopy Housing Project, CUT - Middlesbrough, GIROSCOPE - Hull, Housing Hartlepool, Leeds South Homes (ALMO), Leeds South West

Homes (ALMO), Sheffield City Council, Walsall Housing Group and Yorkshire Metropolitan Housing. John was a member of the CLG's Advisory Network Group on the Evaluation of the Housing Market Renewal (HMR) Pathfinder programme.

John is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Housing. A Member of the UK Housing Panel. Ex-Chair of the Granby (Toxteth) Local Community Partnership. An Associate of the National CLT Network and a Technical Advisor to the CLT Fund.

Breaking up communities?

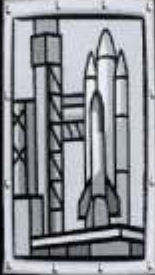
So here goes - almost 50 years work
in 5 minutes flat!

by
John Earnshaw
Lansdown Housing & Regeneration Consultancy

Centre for Housing Policy – University of York
2nd November 2012

**An overview of the
5 minute session**

- Background & History
- Books
- Alternatives
- Community Land Trusts
- Refurbishment Alternatives
- Other Alternatives



I've been everywhere!

- Birmingham - HMRPI
- Bootle – On-Going – CLT
- Goole – CPO Inquiry
- Hull – H.E.L.P in Hull
- Liverpool – Granby and Welsh Streets
- Manchester – Higher Openshaw
- Middlesbrough – Gresham – Now CLT
- Salford – Lower Broughton and saw first resident to be evicted under HMRPI

To name but a few!

KLONDYKE, BOOTLE



GRANBY TRIANGLE, TOXTETH, LIVERPOOL



GRANBY LOCAL COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

- Inaugural meeting 15th August 2007
- Community Council and Developer
- Terms of Reference – jointly agreed
- Agenda
- Minutes of meeting
- Second meeting – 18th September
- Agenda



HULL & NORTH BRANSHOLME



HULL & NORTH BRANSHOLME

- Areas of Hull subjected to slum clearance programmes in 1960's
- Massive Council house building programme at North Bransholme
- Low Demand 40 years on
- **'New' Community** to fight wholesale demolition plans!
- Minor demolitions as agreed by UrBan



PREVIOUS WAYS OF DEALING WITH 'BAD' HOUSING

- Over 100 years of 'Urban Renewal'
- Massive Impact with 2 Million homes of 5 million people have been demolished
- Each generation has to tackle previous failures
- 1960's – Slum Clearance of Older Houses or 'Slums'
- The Housing Act 1974 – 'Improvement' grants
- Clearance Orders!
- CPO's



**ALWAYS LOOKING FOR
INNOVATION & NEW
IDEAS**



**COMMUNITY LAND
TRUSTS**

■ www.communitylandtrusts.org.uk

OTHER ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

- Acquisitions – agreed and voluntary
- First Local Community Partnership at Granby
- More LCP case studies at:
 - East Riding of Yorkshire – Goole
 - Gresham – Middlesbrough
 - Manchester – New East Manchester
 - Salford – Higher Broughton
- Mediator Role
- Meetings
- Negotiations
- Self help groups



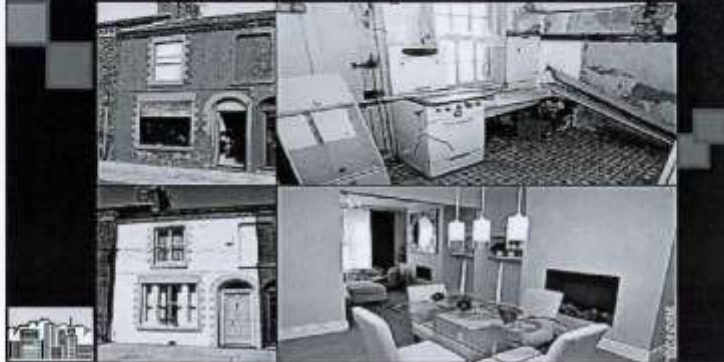
NEGOTIATION, NEGOTIATION, NEGOTIATION



ITV



Monday 16th May -
Friday 20th May 2005

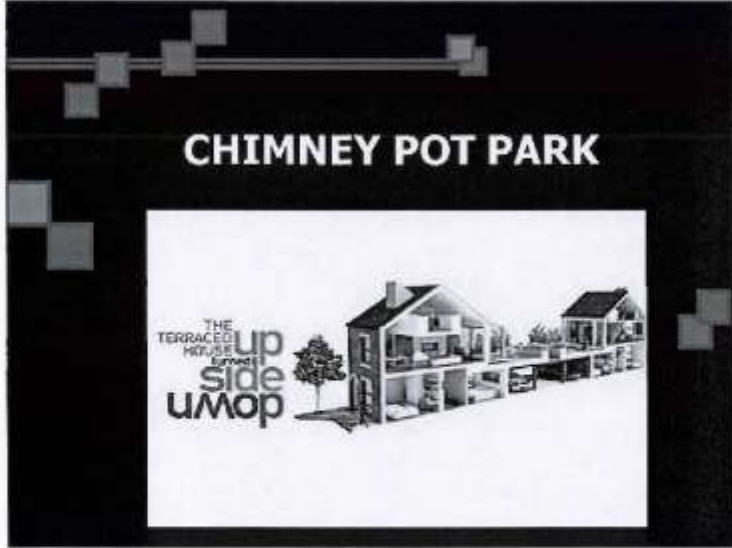
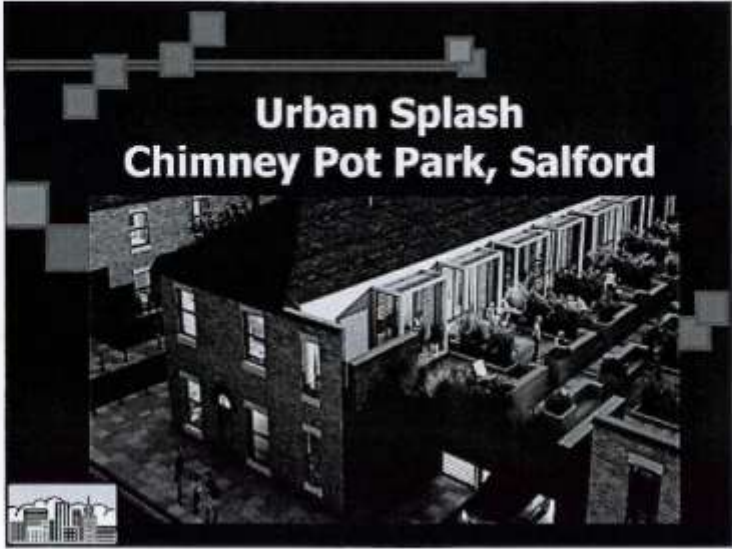


Ringo attacks Demolition of City Homes



- Ringo Starr, the former Beatle, said on 23rd May, that 20,000 homes on Merseyside, including his birthplace, should be restored instead of being knocked down
- "Why are they knocking them down? If it is economically viable, they should do them up"





BOOKS - along the way

- An Introduction to Urban Renewal – Gibson & Longstaff



- Unpopular Housing – Report of Policy Action Team 7

More books...


- Boom or Abandonment – Anne Power & Katharine Mumford



- Empty property – Unlocking the potential
ODPM

A couple more books...

- How to Rescue a House – David Ireland
* read note in book



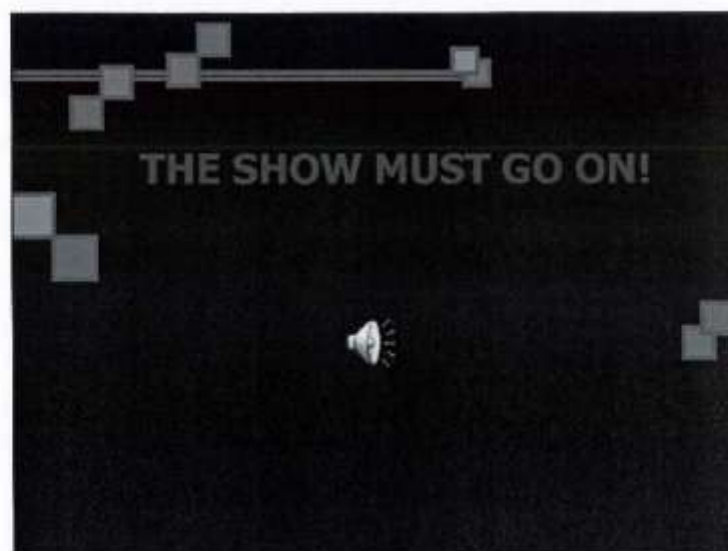
■ Local Sustainable Homes – Chris Bird

The image shows a slide with a black background and white text. At the top, it says 'A couple more books...'. Below that is a bullet point for 'How to Rescue a House – David Ireland' with a sub-note '* read note in book'. In the center is a small image of the book cover, which features the title 'HOW TO RESCUE A HOUSE' and the author's name 'DAVID IRELAND'. Below the book cover is another bullet point for 'Local Sustainable Homes – Chris Bird'. The slide is decorated with a horizontal line and several small grey squares on the left and right sides.

**H.E.L.P IN
HULL & LIVERPOOL**



The image shows a slide with a black background and white text. At the top, it says 'H.E.L.P IN HULL & LIVERPOOL'. Below that is a screenshot of a document. The document has a header that reads 'H.E.L.P IN HULL & LIVERPOOL' and a list of bullet points. The slide is decorated with a horizontal line and several small grey squares on the left and right sides.



Lansdown Housing & Regeneration Consultancy



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Thank You for Listening and Any Further Questions?



‘Proposed housing demolition in Hammersmith and Fulham, London in the 2010s’ – Alice Belotti, West Kensington & Gibbs Green: the People’s Estates

Over the past three years, the People's Estates has established itself as the UK's leading housing campaign challenging a grossly inappropriate development and championing empowerment through community ownership.

Residents are fighting the largest redevelopment in the world outside of China, the £8 billion Earl's Court scheme, while at the same time trail-blazing a key Big Society policy, which could open the way for communities on thousands of council estates in England & Wales to take charge of their neighbourhoods.

The West Kensington & Gibbs Green estates are in the Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham, London W14, David Cameron's favourite Council. The 761 households contain around 2,000 people. 24% of residents are under 18. Ethnic minority residents account for 43% of the population. The largest single group is Somali, which is the most highly organized element of the population supporting our campaign. According to the Government's Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010, the area's population is ranked in the 15% most deprived and the 7% most income deprived in England.

West Ken & Gibbs Green's drive to community ownership was born from the Council landlord's plans to demolish residents' homes, even though these have been repaired and improved to Decent Homes standard, and include sixty houses built just a decade ago.

West Ken: 5 tower blocks between 9 and 11 storeys (348)

Houses (144)

Maisonettes (78)

Gibbs Green: 6 blocks 4 and 5 storeys (98)

HA houses (52) and flats (6)

The Council proposes to sell the 761 homes on the estates in favour of a high-density residential development of 7,500 flats, 90% of which would be for sale at market prices with no additional affordable housing.

We are fighting this scheme for the following reasons:

- The Master plan for the Earls' Court Opportunity Area is grossly inappropriate. The final report (dated August 2012) **[see the pack]** of the Design Review Panel of experts appointed by the two boroughs to review the Master plan expressed serious concerns about the "inappropriate scale" of the development proposed, and about its impact on the "identity of this part of London":

“The Panel is concerned that a sense of place or places is lacking. The mass and scale of the proposals are alien to Kensington and Hammersmith. [...] The grouping of so many tall blocks of 12 or so storeys causes the Panel a concern about the environmental qualities achievable at street level in terms of excessive

overshadowing, 'canyoning effects' of wind and air, and a sense of an over-dominating feeling of enclosure. [...] resulting in questioning urban quality"

The panel concluded:

"The panel does not support the application in its current form and remains to be convinced that the Applicants' proposals are an acceptable scale and desirable form of development for this strategically important London site"

It is worth noticing that the Council did not take into any consideration the Design Review Panel Report.

"The Panel is disappointed that after meetings dating back to April 2011 so few of its comments and concerns appear to have been addressed. The benchmark scheme for Seagrave Road, for instance, has been approved despite the Panel's reservations, undermining confidence that the collective knowledge and experience is at risk of being disregarded for the main planning application sites"

The Council granted planning permission to CapCo's Master plan on 12 September 2012.

- The provision of affordable housing is insufficient, and not in line with the London Plan. Indeed, the Master plan includes only 760 "replacement" homes, plus 740 "affordable" housing (below 80% of housing market prices).
Moreover, "replacement" homes do not include houses with garden (while now approximately 304 households have houses with garden).
The Panel itself expressed concerns that in the Master plan *"there is little integration of affordable homes with the adjoining private development"*, and that they seem to be *"manifestly second-class"*.
- The "community engagement strategy" the Council claimed it has implemented is biased: the Steering Group was set up, controlled and directly financed by the Council to claim that the community was "consulted".

The scheme is undemocratic because it is pursued regardless of the fact that the majority of the residents of the estates and of the wider area (both LBH&F and RBK&C) are against it. In 2009, the two Tenants & Residents Associations collected a petition against demolition and in favour of self-determination that was signed by residents from over 80% of households; since 2011 we have recruited 634 residents from two thirds of households to join West Ken & Gibbs Green Community Homes (WKGCH), the resident-controlled company we have established to take over the estates; in 2012, the Council landlord recorded a three and a half to one response against demolition on a turnout of 68% of households.

In reaction to the Council's consultation we assisted hundreds of residents to express their views. The Guardian reported the results, and we published 538 responses, which open a window into the homes and minds of people whose voices normally go unrecorded **[see in the pack for the community's "flux of conscience". You can also read all the essays on our website].**

- The scheme involves the demolition of the Earl's Court Exhibition Centre. Just when London is successfully projecting its image and position as a 'World City', the demolition and loss of Earl's Court would relegate the UK's position as a world leader in the exhibition and events industry.

This planning application would reduce the amount of venue stock at a time when competitor nations are subsidising, not removing, venues equivalent in location and status to Earl's Court.

Unlike what's proposed to replace it, Earl's Court is authentic and loved around the world. It has a fantastic heritage. It's home to a national institution, The Ideal Home Show, established 105 years ago, as well as the Royal Tournament, along with top events, exhibitions and concerts from Madonna to Pink Floyd.

Earls Court brings 2.5 million visitors, 30,000 exhibitors, hundreds of events, and over a billion pounds a year to London. It sustains thousands of jobs; it's an anchor for London's economy; it's the most dearly-loved creative and business venue, locally, nationally, and globally.

Earls Court is an essential international marketing platform for thousands of small businesses and world brands. East London's Excel is not suitable for most of the Earl's Court shows. Some that transferred there, like the Boat Show, lost visitors; others were forced, by popular demand, to return to Earl's Court.

- The Council's scheme is part of a deeper political agenda, which is to break up poor communities, disperse households within and outside of London, and alter the social demographic of the Borough's council tenants. Stephen Greenhalgh and John Moss's paper, in their "Principles of Social Housing Reform" (2009), state:

"The problems associated with social housing have become entrenched within the current housing system. Council estates have become the very things that they were designed to replace – social ghettos – trapping their residents in a vicious circle of dependency. [...] [policy-makers have the] overarching responsibility to tackle concentrations of welfare dependency and to create mixed income/mixed tenure communities".

It is worth noting that at first the developer wasn't interested in the site of the estates. It was the Council to "offer" the estates to CapCo on a silver platter.

- The Council's scheme will disrupt the community by displacing the existing residents.

Approximately 100 PTs are going to be made homeless.

People living for up to 20 years on a building site (also, the developer is not legally bound to proceed with the phasing): Long term indirect displacement out of exasperation. Very few of the existing residents would actually "benefit" of the redevelopment, and in 10-15 year time. If they do not take up their offer for a replacement home, the flats they are entitled to (thanks to the TRAs working on behalf of the residents) will be sold. We have anecdotal evidence that some people

are already bidding to move out of the estates, because they cannot bear the stress and anxiety arising from this state of uncertainty.

We have a vision: community ownership. Indeed, WKGGCH is modeling itself on Walerton & Elgin Community Homes (WECH), a successful resident controlled housing association, which, was born out of similar circumstances, is a proven mechanism for statutory transfers of council estates, and where recent research has demonstrated significant wellbeing benefits for the population.

Our long-term goal is to improve the health and wellbeing of the population by empowering a socially, ethnically and economically marginalized neighbourhood to achieve sustainable independence through community ownership of their estates. Our vision is to:

- Preserve, improve, manage and provide affordable rented housing for local people and others in need of low-rented housing;
- Prevent the break-up and displacement of an existing well-functioning community;
- Save around 100 private tenant households, including many families with children, from being made homeless;
- Build additional affordable housing and other development sensitively, for the benefit of the community, over time, and according to the needs and wishes of residents;
- Develop community facilities, provide services, and work with like-minded local agencies to support individuals, build social and family ties, grow community life, and cultivate the talents and spirit of young residents;
- Nurture a happy, secure and self-supporting neighbourhood that governs itself through a democratically accountable landlord and acts for the welfare of the whole community;
- Open the way for council estate communities across England and Wales to take charge of their neighbourhoods through S34A of the 1985 housing act using the tried and tested community-based housing association ownership model as per WECH.

‘Housing demolition in the 2000s’ - Sylvia Wilson, HUT- Homes Under Threat

Breaking Up of Communities

My name is Sylvia Wilson; I am founder, director and coordinator of Homes Under Threat (HUT) National Network. HUT is an umbrella group that takes under its wing formed Groups from proposed clearance areas, (not necessarily connected to the former 12 Pathfinder Areas **(*1)**) who are all in the same situation of losing their homes to demolition.

HUT was formed after Whitefield in Nelson; Lancashire underwent two Public Inquiries, (and won them both) to save a quarter of the Wards 2,185 dwellings, a stock of 400 homes under threat of demolition. Split into three phases, we saved 200 homes in the 1st phase of demolition putting a halt, so we thought, to any further thoughts of the displacement of the community, the demolition of our homes and the obliteration of our historic environment and built heritage. English Heritage maintained that “Whitefield is the last remaining virtually intact, (apart from 3 buildings that succumbed totally to fire in 130 years) Victorian Mill town and is of National Historic Importance” and put us on a par with Saltaire in Manchester.

In order to get around the Governments edict not to confirm the Order, Pendle Council has secured now through County Council, the building of a new school in order to demolish the very area the then Secretary of State (Mr Prescott) insisted be saved!

It took our council eight years to refurbish nearly two-thirds of the Order Land, (under community pressure) and two more years further down the line for the proposed demolition of the rest, which will come at a price – the loss of our history and heritage, the alteration of the Victorian townscape that contributes to the town and the distribution and decanting of the community outside of the place they want to live.

HUT was born through experience, at the time when there was nothing and no one with help or information that could assist the residents or communities against the fight for their homes, and because we were successful, groups contacted me for help, information, guidance and morale support, I can’t help financially and I can’t do the job for them, but I can point them in the right direction, what I don’t know, I usually know someone who does?

I don’t know whether to laugh or cry... over the gross waste of millions of pounds spent on the destruction of our homes and a way of life that has taken decades for us to build, of the financial cost to residents pockets, people displaced from home-owner to the unversed realms of renter, of a scheme that has caused the illness and deaths of many of our comrades through stress fighting for something that, in law is a basic given right – a roof over our heads. **(*2)** We have literally given up ten and more years of our lives fighting for a cause due to academic paper exercises and political intrigues should never have been implemented in the first place.

It seems that once every decade since the 1920’s government and councils expeditiously induce yet “another demolition programme,” whether this is someone’s political agenda or “a quick fix” to top-up governments coffers is anyone’s guess, but in their

terms “for the public good,” which is a useless excuse as it is a targeted portion of the public it is affecting to start with— never those who instigate these measures. It does mean that it is the communities who pay for the financial aspect, upheaval and stress when they are decanted to other areas and their perfectly good, solidly owned homes that are already lived in are demolished, a repetition in anyone’s book, these people will never learn...! Einstein got it right when he said, “The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again expecting different results?”

During the last ten years many communities have been broken up and dispersed from areas once thriving and bustling with life, now, if you’re lucky, you’ll find the silent empty streets and boarded-up houses covered in litter, vandalism and graffiti, not so lucky, you’ll find great swathes of empty desolate land where once the hopes, dreams and aspirations of a thriving community are lost for all time. Worse still are the few precious residents who have stood their ground and refused to move, and it’s those precious few, who are trapped in ghost streets because their local authority did not prepare adequately for the purchase of their property or organise a “key-for-key or like-for-like” arrangement, those councils, once in possession of their homes didn’t care enough to find another one for them...

The homes, streets and the residents have been forgotten, left in ruins due to ideas and decisions by those outside of their communities who know nothing of how their areas worked. All the wasted time and money and stress could have been avoided, if only the needs of its community were understood and listened to, better yet not touched in the first place, if they had, the dire economic and housing situation we descended into would not exist now. How many times have they been told that if something works –don’t mess with it! Improvements can only come from those who live in those areas at grass-root-level!

Looking around this room I see many people here that I have worked with over the last decade, helping to fight for their homes, places of work, places of worship, their history and heritage, I have been to their areas, involved myself with their communities, seen the potential for refurbishment of the existing dwellings and a better way of life... but finally I have seen the ultimate humiliating decimation of their homes and community, something that can never be forged in the same way or replaced again.

No one, unless you have been, or are involved personally with a proposed Compulsory Purchase Order, will ever understand the streak of fear or gut wrenching despair that runs through your veins on reading a letter from a Council saying that your home is “not decent” to live in and is about to be taken away from you against your will. That under the Housing Act, your local authority tells you that your home is “unfit for human habitation” on the grounds that the slates may be “slipped or tabbed” your “backyard wall is leaning” that you need “new windows and doors” and because of those things, (which are so easily replaceable under an Urban Renewal Area (URA) or the old fashioned, now none-existent Grant System) your home will be compulsorily taken away from you...! Now under the new pared-down law in the Planning Acts, they don’t even need that excuse to take your home away from you!

Ten years ago, Government stated that there was a gross surplus of 200,000 **(*3)** pre-1919 homes that would have to be demolished... hence Pathfinder. **(*4)** But for the last four years

Government has been telling us there is a chronic shortage of 200,000 homes and we need to build more affordable, sustainable, eco-friendly properties **(*5)** With thousands of houses standing empty each with their own inert energy, the properties are a blank sheet to work with in terms of updating to modern day values, sustainability, cutting energy costs and their affordability, it's a struggle to understand why the government do not close the housing gap with the existing available empty stock, before dithering over newbuild...? Mind boggling when you know Government can't make its mind up on the simple issues, ie, providing an immediate home for folk to live in!

Of the tens of thousands of empty boarded-up properties acquired and still standing abandoned by the local authorities and RSL's, If funding is in such short supply then refurbishment and/or repair to the existing housing stock would be more than halve the cost of a newbuild. Community Housing/Land Trusts, PROD's **(*6)** or Homesteading are ways forward, refurbishment not demolition is the only solution for those in need of a sustainable home, a place of work and a new community to belong to now...!

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**(\*1)** Pathfinder was instigated in nine areas of "alleged deprivation," three more "non-Pathfinder" areas were added to that even though they were not in "alleged deprivation," Cumbria, Tees Valley and East Yorkshire, the 9+3 became the 12 Pathfinder Areas.

**(\*2)** (Article 8.1 - Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence. And 2- There shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right except such as in accordance with this law... for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

**(\*3)** 400,000 homes was put forward for demolition at a government seminar in Accrington in c.2003, (this figure was whittled down by objection and debate by SAVE and myself, the total housing demolition figure was dropped to 200,000. The Permanent Secretary at the time felt that any less than 200,000 would compromise the governments Pathfinder strategy?)

**(\*4)** Pathfinder **is/was not** a Housing Market Renewal as we were led to believe and many perceived, it refers to the Country's housing stock in situ and Governments interference and dalliance of the Country's economic market, thus **it is actually** a Housing (economic) Market Restructuring...

**(\*5)** As of 2011, There were over a million empty homes boarded up and available owned by councils and RSL's, the properties once refurbished would be far more affordable, sustainable and eco-friendly properties when remodeled and revitalised through re-cycling. There were also over a million families on Council waiting lists through out the country, desperate for a home

**(\*6)** Community Right to Reclaim (formally PROD's- Public Request to Order Disposal) Community Right to Reclaim is a very useful legal power that anyone can use to force the sale of publicly owned empty property or abandoned land. Author: Sylvia Wilson. 2/11/12

## Discussion

Liz Richardson –Speaks of problems with politics and democracy that people feel they can't influence these things, decisions are made before they've even been asked about it, consequences are negative perception of democratic process, and conflicts of interest.

Simon Huggill - Left totally disillusioned in local government, and central govt aren't analysing HMR so aren't overseeing them.

Anne Power - God knows how it happened as Prescotts show but no validity to Nevins M62 analysis and Grant Shapps was deceived to release further funds. If the costs had been put up front it would never have been approved. In London properties were saved and now those homes are worth millions, why aren't northern politicians saying this? There was a loss of confidence in cities. She received some leaked figures indicating costs were £35K per person but civil servants caught up in it.

Anon. Newcastle resident – been on Federation for 15 years, heard that where they demolished homes in Walker the council gave the land to the developer for free as it was the only way they'd get someone to redevelop it. EU funding to pathfinder has improved area by river but other parts of Walker nothing. The council made a big deal of building 29 homes but they demolished way more than this. There should be an enquiry.

Ann Petherick – West London experience appalling but doubted their name. 'The People's Estate' was better than the complex acronym for campaigning purposes.

Karen Harman- Concerned about the health and social impacts as some of their residents in Walker HMR have left as too stressed.

Ann Petherick –Talked about Hastings and unintended consequences of un-thought through council actions. Councils changed HMOs and poor bedsits into self-contained dwellings but made no provision in leases for communal areas or maintenance and repair generally, so now they're impossible to mortgage. The EHOs solved the immediate physical problems but couldn't see past their discipline. Newcastle council won't grant permission to have HMOs in some homes so now they stand empty where students and others could be living in them. And they need to be empty 2 years before CPO can be applied so blighted area.

Janis Bright- Reflect on old slum clearances and now, low demand in 1990s residents had negative equity and some wanted out and demolition may be right. There is an idea about who should have more right over what should happen, always look to council but what about future residents point of view. Their problems might be different.

Johnathan Brown– Land is power, London is so valuable and talked about land and developer cartels and collusion with local authorities and RPs. Some genuine intentions but deals in HMR areas done 2 years before residents know about them.



Becky Tunstall - Yes different places different stories.

Janis Bright - Not different places (often same places with waves of renewal over decades).

Johnathan Brown- these places needed investment not being wiped off the map. Criteria is who owned the land and was it of sufficient size and shape to make it attractive to developers. BT: maybe instead of asking did existing residents lose out in slum clearance questions should be reframed as who gained? JB: also the externalities, what about investment forgone, impact of walking to school through empty streets.

Pete Redman- Yes in Southwark existing repairs budgets were reduced to fund the additional costs of demolition, so other projects were suffering, so costs born across the portfolio and not always recognised. There are still some estates he wouldn't keep but what are the real costs and taking that into account are the actions still justified? BT: government guidance is to add 60% to calculations.

Anon. Newcastle resident - Tenants and residents should have access to the same facts and figures as council officials so they're fighting equally. Also if want to keep communities together need to look at using empty spaces above shops and stop developers building hotels and offices and not homes.

Anne Power - 3 costs are never counted, loss of bed spaces, land is often considered to be valueless (like in Liverpool) but not true, environmental costs of demolition and embedded energy in existing homes that is lost.

Becky Tunstall - Maybe we need community accountants to go through it before decisions are made.

Simon Huggill - Also political leadership system, all decisions end in one person, so if they don't believe in global warming or housing then there is no chance.

# Appendix

## **Books and articles on slum clearance 1955-85 found by Becky Tunstall and Stuart Lowe as part of the literature review**

Studies with significant original empirical information about whether slum clearance 1955-85 'broke up communities', and evidence of people's experiences of and reactions to clearance.

Studies of new communities are only included where those who arrived via slum clearance made up a large proportion of the total and/or where separate data on their situation was available.

List complete as of 30th October 2012

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#### Books and reports

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2. Coates, K. and Silburn, R. (1970) *Poverty: the Forgotten Englishmen*, London, Penguin Books.
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