



## **Grainger and the Selling of Social Housing**

I have recently discovered the galloping inroads being made by the private contractor Grainger in the new and expanding build to rent 'market'.

They seem able to bypass local authorities. For instance, in Sheffield, which they see as a 'key target city', they have just bought a tract of land from the city council for thirty two million.

In these schemes returns are sought for investors and provided for shareholders. Grainger are not providing social homes. They talk of flexible tenancies but there is no comfort zone for times of unemployment and hardship. Unlike investors, the community needs 'in house' local authority council house building precisely because it responds to personal circumstances. Housing application should be needs based not at the mercy of the bidding system we've had for twenty years.

To protect recognisable features of viable communities and where possible lay the foundations for future industrial revival, lifelong tenancies should return with hand over policies for another generation of families.

Like the banks and their Tory supporters Grainger Homes want control but are daggers against *any* form of public involvement. It is the vested interest of banks to control every facet of the over valued housing market. For those wanting a roof over their head, impossible benchmarks are being set.

Crucially, in today's charged climate, it is viable working talking communities which are sacrificed.

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<http://www.hl.co.uk/shares/stock-market-news/company--news/archive/grainger-to-forward-fundandacquire-a-build-to-rent-scheme-in-sheffield>

## **Neither Borrower nor Lender! Time for a Two Tiered Economy!**

For the past thirty years there has been a train of thought that the majority of humans would, through endeavour, attain a mythical style of life appropriate to their needs, the so called modern 'work ethic'. However, as populations increase and long term industrial employment has declined, social mobility has slowed.

On the back of Thatcher's right to buy', large swathes of the population have entered the false arena of property profit borrowing, a 'mobility' engineered by finance corporations. As a result, those that do not

borrow on the back of false property inflation are caught in a vacuum, locked into the world of unsecured debt which has now reached dangerous levels.

With credit beginning to 'run out' corporations are still lending on the back of inflated, unrealistic property prices. Borrowers who own property are falsely empowered, enjoying a sense of financial wellbeing over which in reality they have no control.

What has been created is a two-tier class system; those who own property and those who do not. Here in the UK we are approaching the American sub prime lending model.

As a matter of urgency we must break from the creeping power of the middle classes and the top university halls that, geared for dominance and control of the most vulnerable, favour corporate interests.

In housing and social welfare generally corporate control is near established. Where it concerns everyday matters affecting the poorest people from zero hours contracts to the use of housing as a form of social engineering, there are no champions speaking out.

An overlooked but vital element in creating a more equal society is the deflation of property prices.

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30<sup>th</sup> September 2018

## **Homes Before Profit!**

We now have more than a million households living in dire poverty if not destitution. The reasons are many and varied but why is no one asking?

We see thousands upon thousands of new builds all over the land developed in areas where the industry that kept lives and traditional families stable year on year has been lost. Where are the incomes coming from for these outrageously priced homes which are strangely occupied in months, no questions asked?

The UK should take back control by re-opening and nationalising industries such as mining and steel and subsidiaries.

For the working class heartlands nothing short of a socialist revolution will light the flame. For the moment please let us alter the trajectory of home building beginning with a national council home building programme supported by stable, long term employment contracts.

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## **It's Communities We Need, Not 'Development'**

The Commons Library Briefing (December 2018) estimates that between 240,000 and 340,000 new houses will need to be built each year to meet the country's current accommodation needs. However, the continuous expansion in the building accommodation, without adequate growth in industry and employment will simply create dorma-towns or pockets of deprivation.

Town planning needs to consider a sense of community, that is to say, people need to be drawn together for some common purpose and an economic heartbeat is required for such a community to thrive. The death of community or the construction of heartless and unfocused building schemes has contributed to the fact that more than 9 million people in this country express continuous feelings of loneliness

<https://www.campaigntoendloneliness.org/loneliness-research/>

We desperately need more houses, but more importantly we need more communities. Furthermore, we need communities who care. For example, I read with interest the government's Green Paper on Social Housing ('A New Deal for Social Housing' August 2018) but noted that whilst measures to ensure more effective systems of complaint were frequently mentioned and strategies to help people 'buy' their houses were listed, there was not one word written about how to prevent homelessness or how to support individuals with disabilities to access suitable accommodation. Nor was there any reflection that, along with houses, we need communities with school, workplaces, local and accessible health services and all the things that make a thriving community.

As the new year marches forward, I ask that housing planners consider building communities rather than building more and more alcoves of isolation

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