

PLAYERS MANUAL

TASTE OF POWER

THE GREAT MUNICIPAL
SOCIALISM GAME

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Taste of Power: the great municipal socialism game. Don't worry, you don't have to learn any complex rules to play this game! Taste of Power is a role-playing exercise where you pretend to be a member of the different groups arguing over the design of a regeneration scheme in a deprived neighbourhood of a Labour-controlled local authority. You'll enjoy this game and learn from the experience the most when you play a role which differs from your own personal preferences. If you are involved in community campaigning, choose to be a council bureaucrat or property developer. Similarly, if you are a Labour representative, you should opt to be a grassroots organiser. You can only be politically savvy if you know how your potential allies or opponents could think and act.

This manual contains the information required to play Taste of Power. The first section outlines the progress of the game through a series of meetings and events. The second section describes the aims and ambitions of the different groups trying to shape the proposed regeneration scheme. The third section explains the local government politics which will determine the flow of the game.

The players of this role-playing exercise are drawn from different groups: Labour councillors; Labour party members; community activists; council officials; property developers, local residents and community media. Some groups are divided by their political loyalties, e.g. Corbynista or Blairite Labour councillors. Many of the participants will be in more than one team, e.g. community activists who are also Labour members. Within each group, there will be players with conflicting goals, e.g. some community activists will be against any high rise buildings while others are in favour of tower blocks. The umpires will also act as various malign influences from outside the locality, such as the Tory government or mainstream media.

The regeneration scheme is represented as a map of the neighbourhood. The pieces are placed on the game board so that the players can visualise the rival options for this project, e.g. social housing, cooperative workshops, a community centre. At key moments during the game, the umpires will calculate how much revenue will be generated for the local council by these proposed schemes.

You have also been given separately your own political briefing and objectives chart. Keep this hidden from the other players as it contains secret information! You need carefully to study these two pages as its briefing tells you about your political goals and its objectives chart will guide how you

should speak or act during this role-playing exercise.

You will be given clouts – the game’s currency – by the umpires when you successfully fulfil one or more of your objectives in a round of the game.

You will participate in this game in three ways:

- arguing for your preferred redevelopment scheme at meetings;
- creating a model of this redevelopment scheme on the game board;
- exchanging clouts with players to influence each other’s behaviour.

During this role-playing exercise, you will gain or lose clouts depending on how you speak on behalf of your group at meetings and other forms of participation in the game. The objectives chart identifies these positive and negative results during the stages of the game. Please note that even if your preferred version of the redevelopment scheme is not adopted, you can still be the winner of this game through your arguments and actions by having the largest number of clouts.

Some of the players have secret objectives which will gain clouts if achieved at the end of the game. Please consult your objectives chart for these esoteric scores.

There is only one inflexible rule of this game:

The umpires’ decisions are always correct even when they’re obviously wrong and outrageously biased.

1. THE PROGRESS OF THE GAME

Redham City Council and the Trumpton Regeneration Scheme

The 2019 local elections marked a dramatic change within the ruling Labour group at Redham City Council. After decades of increasingly inept dominance by the Right, Momentum mobilised party members to oust the old guard and elect a new cohort of Left councillors. However, deposing the Blairites was the easy part of this radical resurgence. The incoming Corbynista Labour councillors and their supporters must now learn how to run the local state under the most unfavourable of circumstances. Since 2010, Redham City Council has suffered from a vicious 40% cut in its funding by the Tory central government. In its 2019 election manifesto, the Labour party promised not only to defend public services, but also to break with its predecessors' neoliberal economic policies. The first test of the new administration's socialist resolve will be the Trumpton Regeneration Scheme. In the final year of the previous regime, the outgoing Blairite Council Leader negotiated a controversial deal with Megacorp Property Development for the gentrification of this deprived neighbourhood in Redham. By prioritising the building of executive flats and franchise shops, their version of the Trumpton Regeneration Scheme is predicted to generate much needed revenue for preserving council jobs and maintaining local services.

Not surprisingly, this neoliberal project is facing fierce opposition from both inside and outside the Labour party. The properties in Trumpton might be rundown and neglected, but they provide low cost housing and retail outlets for local people, especially those from its long established Afro-Caribbean community. The Blairites' sweetheart deal with the property developers only includes a token number of the social housing flats which are urgently needed in the neighbourhood. Their plan trivialises the climate emergency by providing a minimum of green housing. There is also nothing about the provision of workshops for the new cooperative businesses which are now prioritised in Redham City Council's economic strategy.

All of these criticisms of the Trumpton Regeneration Scheme have validity. What is more problematic is whether the opponents of the existing plan can agree amongst themselves on a credible replacement. Redham Labour party and the inhabitants of the neighbourhood face the difficult task of negotiating this new and improved Trumpton Regeneration Scheme. Raising revenue must be balanced with community development. Protecting the planet has to be reconciled with improving living standards. Because the dramatic events which toppled the Blairites were extensively covered in the mainstream media, Redham City Council is now a flagship administration of Corbyn's Labour party. The

outcome of these local negotiations over the Trumpton Regeneration Scheme will inevitably impact upon national politics. Conflict and compromise will determine their success or failure. Let the game begin and may the best players win!

You can heckle, interrupt or make noises while other people are speaking, but will be silenced by the umpires if you misbehave. The umpires will also intervene in the game as malign forces from outside Redham, such as the Tory government or mainstream media.

ROUND ONE (May 2019)

***1 Media Launch**

Before the 2019 local elections, Redham City Council organised this media launch of the Trumpton Regeneration Scheme. The Blairite councillors, council officials and property developers will explain how the project will benefit both the neighbourhood and the city as a whole. There will an opportunity to ask questions at the end of the launch.

Speakers:

- 1) Blairite Labour Councillors;
- 2) Redham City Council Housing Department;
- 3) Megacorp Property Development;
- 4) Corbynista Labour Councillors;
- 5) Trumpton Community Media;
- 6) Redham CLP Members;
- 7) Trumpton Community Activists;
- 8) Other Attendees.

ROUND TWO (June 2019)

***2 Redham City Councillors' Briefing**

The property developers and council officials meet with the Labour group to discuss the Trumpton Regeneration Scheme and how to respond to the issues raised by the public at the media launch.

Speakers:

- 1) Megacorp Property Development;
- 2) Redham City Council Housing Department;
- 3) Corbynista Labour Councillors;
- 4) Blairite Labour Councillors.

***3 Community Activist Meetings**

The activists from the Walter Rodney Community Centre, Trumpton Housing Action and Redham XR hold separate meetings to discuss their responses to Trumpton Regeneration Scheme and work on alternative plans.

Speakers:

- 1) Trumpton Community Activists;
- 2) Corbynista Labour Councillors.

*4 Redham CLP Meeting

The local Labour party discusses the Trumpton Regeneration Scheme and possible alternatives. Redham CLP members will vote for their priorities in any amended proposal at the end of the meeting. Non-members can't attend this meeting.

Speakers:

- 1) Corbynista Labour Councillors;
- 2) Blairite Labour Councillors;
- 3) Redham CLP Members.

Please note that the *2, *3 and *4 meetings take turns at the game board sequentially and some players are expected to attend all three!

ROUND THREE (July 2019)

*5 Community Consultation Meeting

The local council debates the existing and alternative versions of the Trumpton Regeneration Scheme. The property developers, council officials and members of the public will be invited to express their opinions at the appropriate moment. At conclusion of this meeting, the Redham councillors will vote to indicate their preferred options for the Trumpton Regeneration Scheme.

Speakers:

- 1) Corbynista Labour councillors;
- 2) Blairite Labour councillors;
- 3) Redham City Council Housing Department;
- 4) Megacorp Property Development;
- 5) Trumpton Community Media;
- 6) Trumpton Community Activists;
- 6) Redham CLP Members;
- 7) Other Attendees.

ROUND FOUR (August 2019)

*6 Redham City Council Regeneration Committee Meeting

The Labour group meets with the property developers and council officials to discuss alternative proposals for the Trumpton Regeneration Scheme.

Speakers:

- 1) Corbynista Labour Councillors;
- 2) Blairite Labour Councillors;
- 3) Redham City Council Housing Department;
- 4) Megacorp Property Development.

*7 Community Activist Meetings

The activists from the Walter Rodney Community Centre, Trumpton Housing Action and Redham XR hold separate meetings to work on their alternative versions of the Trumpton Regeneration Scheme.

Speakers:

- 1) Trumpton Community Activists;
- 2) Corbynista Labour Councillors.

*8 Redham CLP Meeting

The local Labour party discusses the alternative proposals for the Trumpton Regeneration Scheme. Redham CLP members will vote for their favoured option at the end of the meeting. Non-members can't attend this meeting.

Speakers:

- 1) Corbynista Labour Councillors;
- 2) Blairite Labour Councillors;
- 3) Redham CLP Members.

Please note that the *6, *7 and *8 meetings take turns at the game board sequentially and some players are expected to attend all three!

ROUND FIVE (September 2019)

*9 Redham City Council Planning Meeting

Community activists, CLP members, council officials and property developers argue for their different versions of the Trumpton Regeneration Scheme. At the end of the meeting after discussing these rival options, the Labour group will vote to decide which one is adopted as official council policy.

Speakers:

- 1) Trumpton community Activists;
- 2) Redham CLP Members;
- 3) Redham City Council Housing Department;
- 4) Megacorp Property Development;
- 5) Blairite Labour councillors;
- 6) Corbynista Labour councillors;
- 7) Trumpton Community Media;
- 8) Other Attendees.

2. THE PLAYERS OF THE GAME

1. Corbynista Labour Councillors

The Corbynistas are the newly elected members who now run Redham City Council. Many of them campaigned against the Trumpton Regeneration Scheme when it was first proposed by the previous administration. Their goals for its redesign are not only maximising council revenue to fund jobs and services, but also meeting the urgent needs of the neighbourhood, especially social housing, green housing, a health centre, cooperative workshops and a community centre.

The Corbynista councillors can collectively cast 25 votes to choose between the different options for the Trumpton Regeneration Scheme at the *5 Community Consultation Meeting and *9 Redham City Council Planning Meeting. Based on their arguments, the umpires will decide whether the 10 LibDem and/or 3 Green councillors will also support their version.

2. Blairite Labour Councillors

The Blairites are the few remaining survivors of the outgoing administration. They are still committed to their original concept for the Trumpton Regeneration Scheme. Their objective is maximising the revenue generated for the local council to fund jobs and services by building as many executive flats and franchise shops as possible.

The Blairite councillors can collectively cast 5 votes to choose between the different options for the Trumpton Regeneration Scheme at the *5 Community Consultation Meeting and *9 Redham City Council Planning Meeting. Based on their arguments, the umpires will decide whether the 10 Conservative and/or 10 LibDem councillors are also supporting their version.

3. Redham City Council Housing Department

These council officials are divided between the top management who are horrified by the socialist politics of the newly elected Labour group and the rest of the staff who are delighted that Redham now has an administration committed to tackling its severe housing problems.

The former are committed to pushing through the original version of the Trumpton Regeneration Scheme with only minor modifications to its prioritisation of executive flats and franchise shops. The latter want to redesign the proposal not only by building more social housing, but also by adding innovative green housing and cooperative workshops.

4. Redham CLP Members

The local Labour party is a broad church of diverse political opinions. The majority of the membership are enthusiastic supporters of the newly elected councillors. There is a minority who are still loyal to the previous administration. Yet, within Redham CLP, the debate over the Trumpton Regeneration Scheme is not a simple divide between Left and Right. For instance, there are millennial socialists who advocate that the plan should generate lots of revenue for local jobs and services. There are also centrist dads who want any redesign to nurture cooperative businesses.

Both the Corbynista and Blairite councillors will argue for the members to support their rival

versions of the Trumpton Regeneration Scheme at the *4 and *8 Redham CLP meetings.

Some of the Redham CLP members are also activists of the Walter Rodney Community Centre, Trumpton Housing Action or Redham XR.

5. Megacorp Property Development

These property developers had enjoyed a close and profitable relationship with the previous Labour administration. Together they designed the Trumpton Regeneration Scheme as a private-public partnership which maximised revenue for both stakeholders. With the Corbynista takeover of Redham Labour group, Megacorp's priority is now to retain as many as possible of the original proposal's executive flats and franchise shops. The growing climate emergency is a potential business opportunity which could also justify building a limited number of green housing units.

6. Trumpton Community Activists

There are three prominent groups in the Trumpton neighbourhood:

Walter Rodney Community Centre

These Afro-Caribbean activists are campaigning against the gentrification of the neighbourhood. They advocate that the redesign of the Trumpton Regeneration Scheme should maximise the number of social housing, local shops, cooperative workshops and a health centre. Above all, they want a new building for the Walter Rodney Community Centre. Living in a deprived area of the city, they support plans that generate more revenue to fund local jobs and services.

Some of these community activists are also members of Redham CLP.

Trumpton Housing Action

These community activists are campaigning against the gentrification of the neighbourhood. They want the redesign of the Trumpton Regeneration Scheme to include more social housing, green housing, cooperative workshops and a health centre. Living in a deprived area of the city, they support plans that generate more revenue to fund local jobs and services.

Some of these community activists are also members of Redham CLP.

Redham XR

These community activists are campaigning for the local council to prioritise the climate emergency in all of its policy decisions. They want the redesign of the Trumpton Regeneration Scheme to maximise the amount of green housing units and include cooperative workshops. They are sympathetic to the building of a new community centre.

Some of these community activists are also members of Redham CLP.

Redham XR can lobby the 3 Green councillors to vote for their preferred option for the Trumpton Regeneration Scheme at the *5 Community Consultation Meeting and *9 Redham City Council

Planning Meeting. The umpires will decide whether their arguments have persuaded these 3 councillors to follow their advice.

7. Trumpton Shopkeepers and Doctors

Both the shopkeepers and doctors are well known in the local neighbourhood. They are interested in advancing their own professional interests in the debates over the redesign of the Trumpton Regeneration Scheme, such as excluding franchise shops or building a new health centre.

Some of them are also members of Redham CLP. One of the shopkeepers is the only prominent Tory in Trumpton!

8. Trumpton Community Media

These former pirate radio operators have gone legitimate and now run a licenced station which broadcasts news, debate and music to the neighbourhood. They would like the redesign of the Trumpton Regeneration Scheme to include a community centre which would provide new studios for their project.

Trumpton Community Media will be providing ongoing coverage of the debates over this project on their Twitter account @TrumptonCM using the hashtag: #TrumptonTWT.

3. THE LOCAL POLITICS OF THE GAME

Redham City Council

In the May 2019 local elections, the results for the 54 council seats were:

- 30 Labour
- 25 Corbynistas
- 5 Blairites
- 10 Conservatives
- 10 LibDems
- 3 Greens
- 1 UKIP (absent in Trump's America)

A majority of 27 or more votes are required to decide the final version of the Trumpton Regeneration Scheme at the *9 Redham City Council meeting.

Trumpton Regeneration Scheme

The game board is a map of this deprived neighbourhood in Redham showing its roads, school and park.

The blank spaces are the sites which are designated for redevelopment.

Low rise buildings are one or two stories high.

High rise buildings are eight stories high.

Low-rise buildings can only be stacked on top of each other or added to high rise buildings in special circumstances which will be indicated by the umpires.

The blocks represent the different units which can be built on a site:

- low rise social housing (red)
- high rise social housing (red)
- low rise green housing (dark green)
- high rise green housing (dark green)
- low rise executive housing (dark blue)
- high rise executive housing (dark blue)
- local shop (brown)
- franchise shop (light blue)
- cooperative workshops (light green)
- community centre (black)
- health centre (orange)

The yellow blocks represent buildings which are not included in the Trumpton Regeneration Scheme.

The units cover either oblong or square spaces and can only be placed in the correct sized sites on the neighbourhood map, e.g. high rise buildings always require a square space.

Every unit has a number which indicates the money raised for the local council through rents, sales, taxes, etc.. The players are awarded clouts at the end of the game according to the total annual revenue generated for the council from the agreed version of the Trumpton Regeneration Scheme.

*9 Redham City Council Planning Meeting

At the end of this meeting which concludes the Taste of Power game, the Labour councillors will vote on the final version of the Trumpton Regeneration Scheme which is then built on the game board.

The umpires will distribute clouts to the players depending upon how the preferred design is rewarded in their briefings:

- the building of specific types of units
- the total annual revenue generated for the council

Please note that players are unlikely to achieve all of their objectives in the final version of the Trumpton Regeneration Scheme. They can best maximise their tally of clouts by working with others to realise a common goal.