

Local government

How Our Cities Fall Prey To Power And Money

Anthony Molloy responding to Aditya Chakraborty's article on "how Manchester was sold to Abu Dhabi's elite".

Guardian Letters, 24th July 2022

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2022/jul/24/how-our-cities-fall-prey-to-power-and-money>

Aditya Chakraborty's well-researched exposé of how a rich and powerful actor has run rings around a naive and emasculated local authority is unfortunately par for the course (How a great English city sold itself to Abu Dhabi's elite – and not even for a good price, 21 July). It may be a particularly egregious example given the UAE's appalling record on human rights, but the root problem has been reproduced throughout the country.

However, it's not too late, and all is not necessarily lost. A substantial land value tax would return much of the relinquished benefit to the public purse, and therefore to the community that unwittingly gave it all away in perpetuity. It would also undermine the business model for this kind of pernicious, speculative project in the future and, by repairing the dysfunctional land market, invalidate the current infrastructure development modus operandi that works so well for the few and so poorly for the many.

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