

## **MAYOR'S SPEECH TO FULL COUNCIL – 08 DECEMBER 2025**

Evening Members, members of the public, and officer colleagues.

As many of you know, last week was quite a momentous week for our borough as Newham has been chosen as the preferred new home for historic London markets, Billingsgate and Smithfield, by the City of London Corporation.

Subject to Parliamentary and planning approval, the markets will move to the Royal Docks in the south of our borough, specifically one of three development sites known as Albert Island bringing jobs and economic opportunity for more of our people.

The announcement follows the Chancellor's recent confirmation of the DLR extension through Beckton Riverside to Thamesmead which similarly will unlock opportunity for our people and will unlock land for up to 25,000 homes and 10,000 jobs.

Newham is changing, Newham is driving growth here in the capital and as I often say, Newham is East.

The markets choosing to call Newham home has been the culmination of over 7 years of hard work, working with council officer colleagues, and it really does send a strong signal that our borough is ripe for investment as well as growth.

I'm proud to see Newham becoming a destination borough and welcome the markets joining other amazing London Institutions including University College London, V&A East, which is going to be opening in the spring, and the London College of Fashion.

Being chosen as the preferred new home of London's historic markets aligns to both our Newham Growth Plan and our inclusive growth and community wealth building intent.

And it's estimated that the move will bring around £750m in local expenditure, over 2,200 jobs, and £130m worth of added value to Newham's economy, and more than double those numbers in economic benefits to the wider UK economy over a 30-year period.

Colleagues, as the year draws to a close, we are continuing preparations to set the Council's Budget which will be coming to Full Council in February next year.

Ahead of that on the 22<sup>nd</sup> December we will be publishing the draft Budget Plan.

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Having grown up in our borough I know how important our council services are and what a vast and impactful role the Council can play in the lives of our residents, whether it be through our brilliant Schools educating the future of this borough; our compassionate social care services providing support to adults and children in need; or the Our Newham Service empowering residents through training and employment opportunities,

Simply put, our Council touches the lives of everyone in Newham.

And together with Cabinet colleagues and officers over the years we've been navigating our Council through the most amazing of times, but also the most challenging of times.

14 years of Government austerity, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Cost of Living Crisis which still is with us.

Through each and every challenge we have stood together with the people of Newham, protected vital services local families rely on, and delivered for our borough.

Every year we've set a balanced budget, transforming service delivery and helping shape a brighter future for everyone in Newham.

It is vital we continue to provide frontline services residents rely on whilst ensuring the Council operates within our means.

And while we wait for the final Government financial allocation to Newham, we really need to be focussed on outcomes.

As always, I'll keep fighting for our most vulnerable residents, protecting vital services, and delivering the transformation our borough deserves.

And together, through all the interventions that we've been making and the agenda we've been driving, because we're on a mission to build a fairer Newham, one where every child has the best start in life, every family feels supported, and every resident can share in the opportunities that growth brings.

That's why I'm really pleased to announce this evening, that, following a review by the National Youth Agency in November, our Youth Empowerment Service has been designated as an exemplary service nationally.

We'll be publishing the report and I'll be circulating a briefing note to Members.

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Young people, as I have often stated, are our future and I was really pleased to see the Government's decision to really value their contribution to our nation with an increase in the Minimum Wage for 18–20-year-olds, and support their entry into employment with guaranteed work placements.

One of the biggest social challenges that we face as a country is the growing number of young people in unemployment, so I really genuinely believe that these measures will positively impact thousands of young people across Newham.

Locally, we will ensure these jobs are unlocked and accessible as we turbo-charge the youth guarantee scheme. Driving forward our plans to become the best place for our children and young people to feel supported and thrive, we'll remain resolute.

Colleagues, as you know, as part of our plans to build a fairer Newham we committed to Just Transition and there's an agenda item that will be introduced by Cllr John Whitworth, we've done a number of projects from reducing traffic, and reducing dangerous driving, to creating people-friendly streets and making our roads safer for everyone, especially children.

The success of these projects speak for themselves. We've introduced 20mph restrictions across our residential streets. We've been able to reduce traffic. We've improved air quality and we've been able to ensure more people feel safe to walk and cycle. We've sought to learn lessons and improve the way we engage with local people on these projects, change which has been recognised in the award-winning engagement for the West Ham Park project.

I'd like to thank also all of the residents who have engaged with me, and also with colleagues and officers, in the people-friendly Woodgrange and Capel project, and particularly the two hundred residents who attended the events held at Forest Gate Youth Zone in October, who were a credit to their community, engaging with their neighbours constructively, and with kindness and empathy. As has been previously stated, unfortunately, in spite of the Council applying for funding from Transport for London for this project as part of our Local Implementation Plan, we were not awarded funding to take this specific project forward.

So just to be clear, the Woodgrange and Capel road scheme relating to our people-friendly streets agenda, will not be taken forward. What I will be doing, however, following this evening, will be

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publishing the report following the engagement with our residents that took place in October, and every single one of those residents that attended across the three sessions will be sent an update with regards to the report that we promised that we would produce.

We have, however, been awarded significant funding for works at the junction of Woodgrange Road, Romford Road, and Upton Lane in the coming two years that will see the junction transformed to improve the safety and comfort of all road users.

Our track record of delivering ambitious schemes to make people-friendly streets, whether tackling rat-running, or road dangers outside schools, has resulted in record sums of funding being awarded to Newham by Transport for London. This demonstrates the importance of keeping up the momentum of delivering for Newham residents.

We only have to look at examples in other boroughs to see that reduced ambition for safer, more active and greener streets can result in significant reductions in investment and hold back progress on making streets fit for the future and safer for our children. Ultimately, it is our responsibility, as elected representatives, to protect and improve both the community and the borough for our residents now and way, way into the future for all of our people that choose to call Newham their home. Although there may be challenging times, and tough choices, it remains a privilege to serve.

Nothing drives home the great responsibility and privilege of representing the people of Newham more than seeing the talent, ambition and enthusiasm of local children, speaking to parents fighting to give their families a good life, and meeting with business owners driving growth in our local economy.

On that note, as the year draws to a close and we take time to celebrate with our loved ones, I will be reflecting on my time serving the residents of our borough, the success we have achieved together, and the work left to do to build a fairer, prosperous, and more inclusive borough for generations to come.

Thank you and Happy Christmas everyone.

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