

Mayor of Newham Rokhsana Fiaz OBE response to Best Value Notice issued by MHCLG 8 May 2025

The [Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government](#) (MHCLG) has today (8 May 2025) issued Newham Council with what's known as a [non-statutory Best Value Notice](#).

This is a mechanism that allows the department to assure itself that the Council is making sufficient progress against its statutory Best Value Duty in how we operate and deliver services, with the department setting out the areas where it expects us to make further progress over the next 12 months.

The Council is already on a significant change and improvement journey to enable us to meet our statutory requirements, transform how we operate and deliver our *Building a Fairer Newham* Corporate Plan. We have already strengthened governance and processes as part of our Action Plan following the Corporate Peer Challenge we instigated in October 2023 with the Local Government Association (LGA).

We are also currently finalising an Action Plan with the Regulator of Social Housing to improve our housing services, following the unacceptable C4 rating the Council received last year. Moreover, to meet the exceptional financial pressures the Council faces as a result of temporary accommodation and rising social care costs, which led to us requesting Exceptional Financial Support from government last year, we are making savings to the Council and transforming how we operate and deliver services.

That is why I welcome MHCLG's acknowledgment of the steps we have already taken since October 2023 and the progress made so far, including introducing independent external challenge overseeing our Transformation and Improvement Board. But it is clear we still have a way to go.

MHCLG have identified the following areas where they would like to see further assurance or improvements:

- Take steps to improve its financial sustainability, reflecting this in the Council's medium-term financial strategy.
- Continue working with the independent improvement & transformation board, making full use of its expertise and responding to its recommendations.
- Review and clarify roles and responsibilities and scrutiny processes to enable more effective decision-making.
- Continue to implement and measure cultural change, particularly in improving relationships between members as well as officers and members.
- Ensure the effectiveness of the council's officer and political leadership, by developing a comprehensive retention strategy, and appropriately managing any leadership changes.

- Continue to deliver at pace against the recommendations from the various review/inspection recommendations and action plans, meeting the set milestones and measuring the impact of change.
- Continue engaging constructively with the department on at least a quarterly basis to discuss progress.

I will be ensuring that the Council works closely with the MHCLG to provide assurance that it is moving as quickly as possible and taking every step necessary to deliver sustainable improvements across all of these areas highlighted. We'll be regularly publishing our progress against the areas highlighted by MHCLG as part of our demonstration that we are committed to continuous improvement.

I am determined that the Council rapidly responds to the Best Value Notice and demonstrates that it is best equipped to deliver for our residents as we accelerate our journey of improvement and change.

Rokhsana Fiaz OBE
Mayor of Newham

WE ARE NEWHAM.