

# **DELIVERING BEYOND QUESTION: THE CHALLENGE TO THE SELF STYLED MOST SUSTAINABLE 2012 LONDON OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES TO LEAVE A LEGACY OF PROSPEROUS, SUSTAINABLE AND COHESIVE COMMUNITIES IN EAST LONDON**

Clive Dutton  
Executive Director, the London Borough of Newham

**Abstract:** As the elected local authority encompassing most of the Olympic Park being built to stage the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, the London Borough of Newham can already demonstrate how its proactive regeneration campaigns and programmes provided the crucial underpinning on which the Olympic bid was won.

While construction of the Park and the actual sports venues are the responsibility of the Olympic Delivery Authority, Newham with its on going “place making” role has one of the greatest long term interests in seeing a sustainable Olympic Park emerge which provides the transforming element for the long term regeneration of East London .

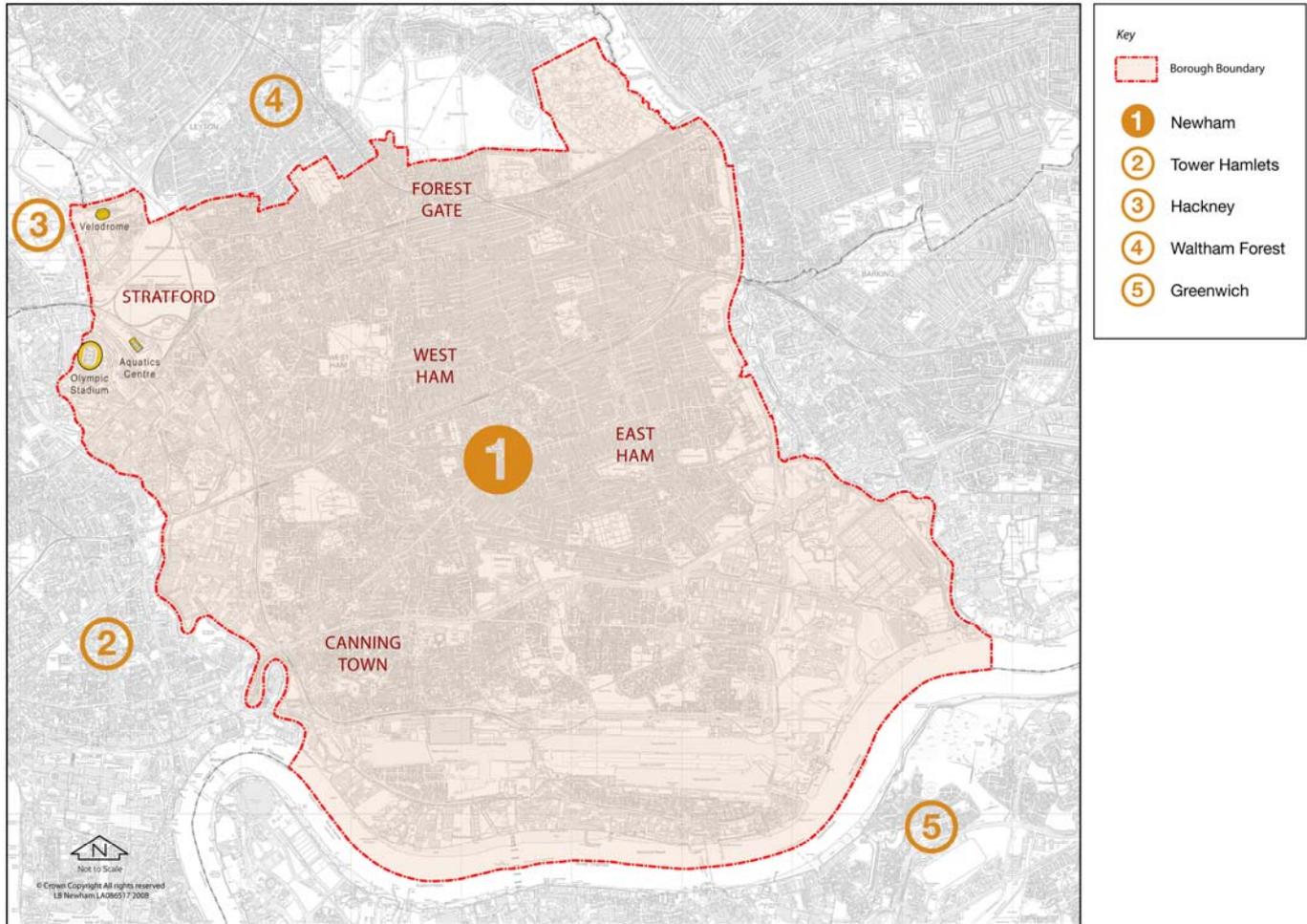
It argues that the bar is a high one to reach to achieve the goal of prosperous, sustainable, communities but, by doing so, the debate on whether hosting an Olympic Games contributes to their fulfilment can take a decisive turn towards a positive answer.

## **1.BACKGROUND- NEWHAM AND LONDON THAMES GATEWAY**

1.1 Newham is a borough in East London which is home to some 260,000 residents , the demographic profile of which shows it has the youngest population in the UK and an ethnic composition making it one of the most diverse on earth. Its key town centres include Stratford, Canning Town and the former Royal Docks ( the largest of all the former London Docks), Green St and Forest Gate, East Ham, and Plaistow and West Ham. Its governance is by an elected Mayor and Council.

1.2 During the Victorian period, Newham served as one of Greater London’s most important centres of manufacturing, utilities, distribution and cargo handling and transport. From the 1970s onwards the decline in these industries was precipitate , the number of jobs halved and unemployment rose to alarming levels of over 20%. By the early 1990s, Newham was classed in government statistics as one of the most deprived communities in the UK.

1.3 Despite this unwanted economic position, opportunities were evident for Newham. For its continued growth, London is redeveloping towards the east where there is a significant amount of land, especially former industrial or “ brown field” land, on which new employment centres and housing communities can be built. In order to improve accessibility to these sites, transport investment in London from the mid 1980s focused on linking them with central London and new business districts emerging in London Docklands. This came to be known as London Thames Gateway, part of a bigger Thames Gateway sub-region which extends out to the Thames estuary mouth.



**Figure 1- Newham and the four other Olympic Host Boroughs**

1.4 Newham is strategically placed at the western end of London Thames Gateway just 8 minutes by Underground from the City. It began to benefit from billions of pounds invested in transport: tube upgrades and new tube lines; improved overground rail services; a new link road to the motorway system and even a new airport, London City Airport , specially focused on business travellers. By the mid 1990s Newham’s 400 hectares of brown field sites had been transformed from peripheral to strategic locations.

**2. WINNING THE CHANNEL TUNNEL RAIL LINK STATION AT STRATFORD AND STRATFORD CITY**

2.1 A key part of the developable land in Newham comprised the former Stratford rail lands, some 55 hectares in the Lower Lea Valley and immediately north of the present Stratford Town Centre. When the then British Rail shortlisted Stratford rail lands as a possible terminus for the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL) , Newham Council decided to go all out to win an international station there visualising it as a flagship development around which a new metropolitan centre for East London could be created. How the Council created campaigning organisations to defeat the favoured BR proposal which was planned to come into London on the south bank of the Thames with a terminus in a low level station under Kings Cross is described in a brochure “ How the East was won: Newham’s 13 year campaign to achieve Stratford International station on the Channel Tunnel Rail Link”

2.2 By the mid 1990s, Newham’s proactive campaign had led to the switching of

the route of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link to the north bank of the River Thames and had also won a new intermediate station in the Borough, Stratford International, the building of which was completed in 2006. In turn, this enabled the comprehensive masterplanned mixed development of Stratford rail lands surrounding the new station called Stratford City, instead of a slower, piecemeal redevelopment which would almost certainly have comprised lower density, lower quality development.

2.3 Newham was the planning authority which gave planning permission for the Stratford City scheme in 2005, by which time the 1,100,000 sq metres mixed scheme comprised: a 100,000 sq metres shopping district, a 350,000 sq metre commercial area, over 4500 new homes in a mini new town, leisure and landscaped areas, public service facilities such as schools, health centres. Newham then also signed up to the charter of Stratford City Development Ltd alongside London & Continental Railways and their preferred developers of whom Westfield remains particularly committed. The vision of a new metropolitan centre for East London was on the verge of being realised when the London bid to host the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics was voted the winning bid.

### **3.0 THE KEY THEME OF THE LONDON 2012 OLYMPIC BID- “ THE GREENEST, MOST SUSTAINABLE GAMES EVER”**

3.1 Between November 2004 and the eventual decision to grant London the 2012 Games in July 2005 with its pledge to promote the greenest, most sustainable Olympic Games ever, key elements of Stratford City were incorporated into the submitted plans to improve the chances of the bid being successful. Against a background of many facilities being deconstructed after previous Olympic Games, the IOC indicated that in challenging bidders to lodge proposals which included sustainable development as a key feature, they wanted the number of temporary buildings and facilities minimised and put a premium on the ability to re-use them and keep them as permanent buildings. The 2012 Olympic Park is located to the immediate west of Stratford City- just a 10 minute walk from Stratford Regional station and the new Stratford International station. The master plans for the Olympic Park were integrated with those for Stratford City

### **4.0 STRATFORD CITY HOUSING – FIRST USE AS OLYMPIC VILLAGE**

4.1 There will be no temporary Olympic Village for the 2012 London Games. Instead up to 17,000 athletes, officials and coaches will be accommodated in part of the housing elements of the Stratford City mixed development which will form the 2012 Olympic Village. Temporary walls in the housing units will enable there to be more temporary dormitories in them but they are designed such that these walls can easily be taken out and elements retrofitted to form kitchens in what will be permanent homes.

4.2 Equally, public service buildings- schools, a polyclinic etc in that same north eastern part of the Stratford City development will all be used temporarily in the Games as dining and other facilities for the visiting athletes and officials.

### **5.0 STRENGTHENING THE TRANSPORT PROPOSALS- THE OLYMPIC JAVELIN SERVICE AND USING OTHER EXISTING FACILITIES**

5.1 At Olympic bid shortlist stage, the London 2012 bid was marked down on its transport proposals. In response, a masterstroke of the London team was to commandeer use, for the duration of the Olympic and Paralympic Games, of the high speed commuter train services running on the High Speed 1 line (former CTRL) between St Pancras, Stratford International

and stations in North Kent to be a shuttle service named “ The Olympic Javelin Service”. Indeed this service will also use the international platforms at Stratford International to intensify train shuttle services. New trains built by Hitachi were ordered at a cost of £350m from the Olympic funding, but these fast commuting services came into use in summer 2009 and will continue indefinitely after the Games.

5.2 The fact is that, without the winning the CTRL station and other associated facilities, there would have been no Stratford City which lends its housing to form the Olympic Village and no fast domestic train services to use as a special shuttle train. Newham’s proactive CTRL campaign was a key factor in winning these facilities- one thing has led to another and the Olympic bid has added momentum to the regeneration of Stratford City and Stratford International and vice versa. Newham thinks it justifiable to claim that its proactive regeneration campaigns and programmes provided the crucial underpinning on which the London 2012 Olympics could be based. It certainly would have been impossible for the bid to have referred to a “ car free Olympics”- a critical component of sustainability claims- without this infrastructure.

5.3 It has been estimated that Newham benefits in terms of Olympics related infrastructure investment alone in the amount of £27 per head to every £1 extra its residents need to pay in local tax- council tax- in their contribution to the cost of the Olympic Games, so it gains significantly from London winning the bid. Nonetheless , it is worth recognising that Newham is working with partners to try and realise as much as £22 billion of gross development value in all the regeneration schemes taken together in the years to 2025 and this comprises £7billion in the Olympic Park and venues but also £15billion in other schemes.

5.4 Although separately located in the Royal Docks , and therefore outside the Olympic Park as such, the ExCeL exhibition and conference centre was regarded as “ the jewel in the crown” as a potential Olympic venue by the IOC adjudicators on their visit in February 2005. This is again because it is an existing building which is being loaned for use as a sports venue during the Games. In fact ExCeL will accommodate no less than 7 Olympic sports making it one of the most used Olympic venues.

5.5 Newham can point out that its early support both in getting ExCeL established and surviving when industry competitors responded by cutting their prices for exhibitions etc was very significant. That support was most tangible when Newham used its discretion under local government rules to waive £1m in national non domestic rates owed by ExCeL in the early years of operation when it was not yet established.

5.6 Since that time and with new owners putting in the £168m investment for a second phase expansion due to complete in time for the Games, ExCeL reached a major milestone when it played host to the G20 Summit in April 2009. Newham also engaged in successfully lobbying government and public agencies- DCLG and LDA in particular to contribute an additional £6m shortfall in funding for Docklands Light Railway. This has enabled there to be a 3<sup>rd</sup> car upgrade on the Beckton line serving ExCeL when the transport planners projected Games visitor numbers would be beyond capacity in the peaks.

5.7 It was feared that building the Olympic Park-two thirds of which ,including most of the sports venues north of the River Thames, lies in Newham – and which required the relocation of over 200 local businesses from a reasonably successful industrial estate at Marshgate Lane and other adjoining industrial areas -would displace as many as 6500 jobs. That employment loss from displacement was set against a forecast of 12000 new jobs that would be created in constructing the OP and venues and in the crucial Olympic legacy , i.e. the net job gain would be just 5500 . The London Development Agency led the work to relocate these businesses with Newham’s business development team and those from the other boroughs giving some support at the margin. The signs are encouraging that far fewer jobs than feared

will be lost- perhaps less than half of the initial estimate because many firms found new sites in Newham or in other areas of nearby East London.

5.8 The newly created Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) is charged with delivering the Olympic Park, the new sports venues and undertaking modifications on existing facilities including many historic buildings and facilities. As is stated later, ODA work rightly gives prominence to sustainable features and climate change mitigation in design, construction and maintenance. However, action by Newham in the areas described above are already a considerable contribution to the sustainability of the Games legacy.

## **6.0 THE ODA'S WORK FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND COUNTERING ADVERSE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE**

6.1 The ODA is an agency vested by Parliament with substantive planning and executive powers so that it would deliver the Olympic facilities well in time for the 2012 Games. The local authorities in its operational area like Newham still seek to represent their residents' interests to ODA despite this overriding authority. For the most part, there is due recognition of roles- Newham recognises ODA have a demanding timetable which they simply have to meet and the ODA recognise the co-operation of the local authority which know their areas and local communities is desirable to enable their work.

6.2 There is a largely shared agenda between Newham and the ODA when it comes to delivering a sustainable Games. On assuming its functions, the ODA quickly stated that London is to be the first Summer Host City to embed sustainability and measures to mitigate the impact of climate change in planning from the start. They aim to set new standards and create positive and lasting change for the environment and community. They want to use the Games as a catalyst to change and for the regeneration and the improvement of the quality of life in East London, and to encourage more sustainable development across the whole of the UK. The ODA is setting a high standard in its work – some comment it is “raising the bar in the UK about sustainability”

6.3 The ODA London 2012 Sustainability Plan : “Towards a One Planet 2012” focuses on 5 key themes :

- Climate change- minimising greenhouse gas emissions and ensuring facilities are able to cope with the impacts of climate change
- Waste- minimise waste at every stage of the project, ensuring no waste is disposed of to landfill during Games time and encouraging the development of new waste infrastructure in East London
- Biodiversity- minimising the impact of the Games on wildlife and their habitats in and around Games venues, and leaving a legacy of enhanced habitats where possible in the Olympic Park
- Promoting access for all and celebrating the diversity of London and the UK creating new employment, training and business opportunities
- Healthy Living – inspiring people across the country to take up sport and active, healthy and sustainable life styles.

6.4 It is for the ODA to give a more comprehensive account of the approach it has taken to building the stadia, Park and venues in sustainable materials, as to the sustainable construction methods it has used and how it has sought to incorporate sustainable maintenance. However, to acknowledge the importance of these issues it is worth referring to a few examples of how sustainability has been a major feature of ODA work:

- 95% of the material from facilities demolished in the area of the Olympic Park have been re-used on the site
- There has been remediation of the soil which was often contaminated through soil washing
- More than 50% by weight of construction materials for the facilities and waste from the area is being carried by rail and water
- £60m has been made available to upgrade the locks and waterways of the Bow Back Rivers so that they can both carry this construction material and waste and also be improved as leisure waterways.
- The main Olympic Stadium is designed for a large proportion of the seating area to be demountable with a target objective to reuse those seats
- All facilities are designed to be very energy efficient and reduce the need for power- for example natural ventilation is sought to reduce air conditioning.
- A new Energy Centre is being built in the west of the Olympic park to provide a power, heating and cooling system across the Park for the Games and for the new buildings and communities that will develop in the legacy phase afterwards. The design of the Energy Centre is sustainable and flexible with innovative methods which will have environmental and economic benefits. It will have a biomass boiler that uses woodchip as fuel and a natural gas powered Combined Cooling, Heat and Power plant. It will be supported by a primary substation. It should be noted a further Energy Centre will also be built on the Stratford City site itself to provide a system in that key part of the new metropolitan centre . It will be expandable to give even more power to the region.
- There will be photo voltaics on all buildings and a substantial 90 metre wind turbine providing significant power. In respect of the latter , concerns from local people in respect of flicker effects and noise impacts have been raised which may need addressing in the planning process.
- There will be a new pumping station with a green roof to attract wildlife and a glowing lantern on top of the stack as a landmark
- The ODA and Thames Water are proposing to build a facility to recycle waste water into clean water. It will take waste from the Northern Outfall tunnel that runs under the Greenway. The water extracted will be treated using the latest technology. The aim is to provide 574 cubic metres per day of non-drinkable water to the venues and infrastructure on the Park which along with rainwater harvesting could be used on the Olympic Park for : toilet flushing ; irrigating parklands and fields of play within venues, such as the Olympic Stadium ; cooling/ heating for the Energy Centre
- The Olympic Park is being designed in two sections. North of the Stratford International station box it will have a more natural look, utilising the river valley and with wetland habitats where a secondary objective would be to hold and attenuate the flow of flood waters. South of the station box would be an urban park “ abuzz with events” rather than more green space.
- The Games are intended to be accessed by public transport, cycling or walking. There will be no provision for cars. In running the actual Games, LOCOG will add to the pressure to make it a public transport Games –ticket sales for events will be linked to public transport – as well as them actively promoting walking and cycling to the Games. LOCOG also actively seek sponsors and partners who have green credentials- even BMW are required to provide eco-cars.

6.5 For the first time in the history of the Games an independent organisation- the Commission for Sustainable London 2012 – has been set up as an independent auditor and verifier of claims made by the organisations involved in the Olympics. It has shown itself to have a wide focus and a roving approach to fulfilling its brief, seeing its purpose as more than overview and scrutiny of the ODA. It has developed a measuring and monitoring strategy- its initial reports suggest good progress especially on the construction side. The Commission have indicated they wish to continue their independent role to oversee delivery of the Olympic legacy. Though not yet confirmed, there is an expectation they will do so.

## **7.0 COMPLEMENTARY MEASURES IN IMMEDIATELY ADJOINING AREAS**

7.1 The ODA’s remit is for a specific defined area... If the 2012 Olympics are to be a major catalyst helping to transform and regenerate East London, the area must be woven into, tied in seamlessly physically, socially and economically to adjoining areas. It is here that Newham and the others which make up the Five Host Boroughs (5HBs) have an important role. The regeneration of East London would not be helped if the Olympic Park remains a somewhat apart special area and not part of the overall area. An abiding fear with the coming of the Games was that an “ us and them” division would emerge with local people feeling socially excluded from the smart areas rising in the Olympic Park. The boroughs like Newham have had to negotiate for actual connections to the Olympic Park to begin to overcome this concern.

7.2 Also outside the Olympic Park and ODA area is Stratford Town Centre and Stratford High St. With people from around the world set to visit Stratford in the time of the 2012 Games , it was quickly recognised that not only were public realm improvements needed there before that, but that there needed to be a legacy thereafter for the people in the area. Work with other partners and stakeholders to deliver this improved public realm has been focused in a programme called High Street 2012. This draws on the fact that part of the Olympic marathon route through East London is from Aldgate through to Stratford a series of town centre high streets. The High St 2012 project brings together the boroughs of Tower Hamlets and Newham, Transport for London and the GLA, the London Thames Gateway Development Corporation, ODA and LOCOG and other partners in a key programme to identify and deliver an improved public realm for the Games which will also leave a meaningful legacy.

7.3 In the wider impact zone surrounding the Olympics, Newham is also working to a sustainability framework,. It is seeking to embed sustainability at the heart of masterplanning for Metropolitan Stratford. The Borough is also developing plans for eco zones through the Lea Valley and Royal Docks. There is a recognition more needs to be done on energy conservation in homes and on energy efficiency.

## **8.0 SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC AS WELL AS ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY – ITS ALL ABOUT THE OLYMPIC LEGACY**

8. 1 Achieving the environmental outcomes touched on in paragraph 3.1 are a key part of delivering a sustainable community. However, unless they are complemented by achieving social and economic outcomes- improving the economic and social situation of local households and communities , improving their life chances through better qualifications and access to employment ,and life choices, their housing, health and wellbeing, then the once in a lifetime opportunity to use the 2012 Games as the catalyst for “ the convergence agenda”

(bringing East London at least up to the London average in these respects) will have been lost. In this respect it all boils down to the Olympic legacy.

8.2 Early contributions to the legacy not yet mentioned that would have proceeded much more slowly, if at all, without the Games included the undergrounding of power lines from Stratford to West Ham at a cost of over £340m. Over £1 billion was also expended by the LDA in land assembly for the Olympic Park. Without this, it might have taken some 20 years for Newham and its neighbour borough Tower Hamlets to have brought together the land in the Lower Lea Valley for comprehensive regeneration. Perhaps as many as 14 Compulsory Purchase Orders, never easily obtained in the British system, would have been needed. The boroughs would have had to act incrementally, i.e. one area of land would have been regenerated but might have to be sold before the next could be addressed.

8.3 However, in paragraph 5.3 above reference was made to Newham being set to benefit from £15bn of regeneration programmes and projects which were mainly being developed or were being planned before the Olympic bid was won, i.e. for these the Olympic Games were not the catalyst- indeed in some cases they provided a platform enabling them to happen. The Stratford City scheme with a gross development value of £4 billion has already been referred to but there is also a £3.9 billion regeneration of the Canning Town and Custom House area for which Newham Council itself is particularly responsible as the main landowner and the landlord of many people living there. There are other projects in the Royal Docks and the coming of the new rapid cross London railway Crossrail. As complementary projects these will themselves impact on and shape the Olympic legacy to a greater level of quality and investment. There will be real synergy between them.

8.4 The ODA and LOCOG will do their best to leave an endowment assisting all the facets of sustainability but their responsibility will cease on the completion of the Games. Newham has a local authority's duty of "place making"- as do the others in the Five Host Boroughs (5HBs) grouping and a long term interest in sustainable regeneration of the Olympic Park and the whole local area. It is in it for the long term.

8.5 The Mayor of Newham, Sir Robin Wales, who is the only local authority member of the London Committee for Organising the Olympic Games (LOCOG) and one of the two elected mayors on the board of the newly formed Olympic Park Legacy Company (OPLC), has spoken out clearly on what he means by Olympic legacy. "Legacy at the end of the day is about people achieving real local jobs, the ability for local people to have equal chances of realising their ambitions and living healthy and happy lifestyles. That is what we are going to make sure we achieve".

8.6 The 5HBs have already begun work with the GLA, LDA and the newly created Olympic Park Legacy Company (OPLC) on a Strategic Regeneration Framework and convergence agenda for the wider impact zone of the Olympic Park.

8.7 The OPLC, which will inherit the continuing Olympic venues and OP and is expected to have a life of at least 20 years has sustainability central to its business objectives and clearly sees it as part of the Unique Selling Point of future development. Its Mission Statement sets out its aims as "To create a lasting legacy for the London 2012 Games by developing the Olympic Park into a new metropolitan centre with a prosperous, vibrant and sustainable community for London centred around parklands and facilities that promote active sport and leisure participation for the local communities, visitors and elite athletes" Its objectives are:

- The transformation of one of the most deprived areas in the UK into a world class, sustainable and vibrant neighbourhood for East London where people now and for future generations will choose to live, work and enjoy their leisure time
- A model for sustainable living set within the context of the wider Thames Gateway eco-region
- “ A must visit, must return” destination which celebrates its sporting legacy with world class facilities for elite athletes and sporting experiences for local residents and visitors.
- Unique cultural and leisure attractions and facilities centred around top quality parklands and waterways
- A diverse and dynamic community which is connected with its neighbours and which acts as a catalyst for the economic regeneration of the Lower Lea Valley and East London
- The development of some 10,000 new homes, many for affordable rent or ownership
- Offices, shops, hotels, leisure and other commercial businesses capable of sustaining many thousands of jobs
- Significant private sector investment from around the world providing best value and a good return to the public purse
- A legacy master plan which will provide a framework for the development of the Olympic Park site over a period of some 25 years

8.8 In working with the OPLC, Newham will be lobbying for the Company to have freedom of manoeuvre and decision in delivering a sustainable and exciting legacy and not just have a focus on rapid repayment of the initial investment. The OPLC is a new creation and it could yet establish an exciting vision for the legacy OP which would include major educational, environmental and leisure visitor attractions in with a residential led post Games development masterplan. There is all yet to play for.

8.9 Underpinning the Strategic Regeneration Framework is the Multi Area Agreement (MAA) between the 5HBs. This is an ambitious agreement between the boroughs, the GLA and the Government to achieve key objectives from the Games in respect of: public realm, on reducing worklessness ; and on housing a key feature of which seeks to help local people “get a foot on the housing ladder”-mainly through shared equity tenure. Alongside the MAA there is a shared aspiration for the OP to be of the highest environmental standards by having it designated a Royal Park(RP) so that it will be managed and maintained to RP quality.

8.10 The key to economic and social sustainability is recognised as getting people into work. Newham has developed an innovative organisational hub called Workplace , essentially an employment registration and job placement agency which brings together Newham, Job centre Plus and other partners alongside developers and employers with major regeneration projects who are looking for significant number of employees. These latter commit to advertising and trying to fill those jobs through Workplace. Running for nearly 2 years, the initiative and a separate pilot complementing it by the Mayor of Newham to get into work local people who have never worked (or not for a long time) has proved very successful, with job placement targets being met even in the recession. The hope is that the jobs resulting from the Olympic Legacy and other big schemes like Crossrail in the area will all be put into Workplace

8.11 Newham currently has the lowest CO2 emissions measured in tonnes per household of any of the London boroughs- at just 18.36 compared with a London average of 21.91 and 26.10 , the highest emissions in the London borough of Richmond. This low carbon footprint of the existing Newham community is clearly linked to poverty and low car ownership and

use. While the aspiration for Newham is to converge on the higher London average for economic activity and affluence, attainment of qualifications and the key indicators of liveability this ambition does not extend to the carbon footprint. As is shown in this paper, achieving a low carbon economy and community is a key aim of Newham so convergence should not be at the cost of the environment.

## **CONCLUSION**

It is a huge challenge to deliver both the most sustainable Olympic Games ever and a legacy that enables local people to see their life chances and life choices improved to converge at least to the higher average for London as a whole. So far progress is not yet sufficient across all areas. All in Newham need to redouble efforts with other stakeholders to raise achievement if the high goals of prosperous, sustainable local communities are to be met. The bar is a high one to reach but the aims are so vitally important we simply must succeed. We will strive all we can so we can show beyond question with the London 2012 Games that hosting an Olympic Games can contribute real and lasting regeneration to their host cities.