

**Mayor Rokhsana Fiaz OBE
Full Council Speech and Announcement
Wednesday 19th July 2023**

Public service demands ethics, moral compass and honesty

Colleagues, good evening.

Can I begin by extending my heartfelt condolences to one of our valued colleagues, Chair of Council, Cllr Rohima Rahman, who has experienced profound loss in her family.

Losing both her mother and not too long ago her beloved father. In moments like these, we remind ourselves of the immense role our family and parents play in shaping our lives and guiding us along this journey we call life.

Our parents are the pillars of strength, the foundation upon which we build our dreams and aspirations.

They are the ones who nurture us with unconditional love, support our ambitions, and instil within us the values that help define our character.

It is through their dedication and sacrifice that we gain the courage to face challenges and embrace success.

Let us take a moment to reflect on the profound influence our parents have had on us and the role they continue to play in our lives.

Their love and care having shaped us into the compassionate and resilient community that we are today.

Now, more than ever, we must recognize the critical role we play as a community in supporting our elderly residents.

Just as our parents cared for us, it is our duty and privilege to care for those who have paved the way for us.

We are witnessing a remarkable shift in demographics. Our population is ageing, and with that comes the responsibility to ensure that our elderly citizens are valued, cherished, and supported in leading healthy, happy and fulfilling lives.

The elderly have contributed immeasurably to our community, building the foundations upon which our borough stands today. Now it is our duty to ensure they lead their golden years in dignity, comfort, and good health

Healthy living is not just a catchphrase or a fleeting trend; it is a fundamental right for every individual, regardless of age.

We believe that a healthy community is a strong community, and that includes our elders.

First and foremost, we are addressing the issue of healthcare access to ensure our residents have fair access to the services they need.

We are committed to continuing to work closely with healthcare providers to establish convenient and accessible facilities, tailored to the unique needs of our elderly residents.

We will strive to eliminate barriers to healthcare including tackling inequalities, making sure that transportation, affordability, and quality are never obstacles to receiving the care they deserve.

Physical activity is another essential aspect of healthy living for the elderly.

We are investing in community centres, parks, and recreation facilities, ensuring that they are equipped with senior-friendly amenities and activities.

From gentle exercise classes to walking clubs, we want our elderly residents to have a wide range of opportunities to stay active and maintain their mobility.

But health is not just about the physical body; it also encompasses mental and emotional well-being.

Social isolation is a significant concern among the elderly, and we are committed to tackling this issue head-on.

We are expanding social programmes and initiatives, encouraging intergenerational activities that bring our elderly residents together with the younger members of our community.

The wisdom and experience of our seniors are invaluable, and fostering these connections will benefit all.

In addition, we are advocating for lifelong learning opportunities, ensuring that our elderly residents have access to educational programmes that stimulate their minds and encourage continued personal growth.

Whether it's learning a new skill or participating in cultural activities, we believe in nurturing a sense of purpose and fulfilment throughout all stages of life.

As we work towards a healthier Newham for our elderly residents, we must also acknowledge the vital role that families and care-givers play.

Let us applaud and recognize the efforts of those who care for our seniors, providing them with the necessary resources and respite to continue their essential work.

But achieving all of this requires collective effort. I call upon our community, local businesses, and not for profit organizations to join hands with us in this endeavour.

Let us remember that the measure of a society's greatness is how it cares for its most vulnerable members.

Let us be a beacon of compassion, respect, and inclusivity for our elderly citizens.

By valuing healthy living for the elderly in Newham, we not only honour the past but also invest in a brighter and more inclusive future for all.

Colleagues,

As Mayor of Newham, I firmly believe that democracy is the cornerstone of our society.

It empowers us to make choices, elect representatives, and collectively shape the path our community takes.

The dedication and participation of our citizens in the democratic process are essential in ensuring a flourishing and inclusive future for our borough.

Last week, we witnessed two by-elections, and this evening we congratulated the new councillors elected in this democratic process.

As elected representatives, you now have the duty to make a positive impact on the lives of our residents, because we have a collective duty to make their lives better.

You know you will need to approach your new roles with integrity, ethics and an unwavering commitment to being anchored by a moral compass of truth, honesty and adherence to the law and good governance.

For our residents.

Who rightly expect all elected representatives and Council officers to uphold the highest ethical standards.

In public service, we must always lead by example, demonstrating our commitment to honesty and the Nolan Principals.

It is crucial to remember that as representatives of our constituents, we are entrusted with the responsibility to create an environment of inclusivity and fairness.

We must reject any form of discrimination, misogyny, homophobia, or intolerance that threatens to undermine the principles upon which Newham stands.

I also want to acknowledge the dedication of our hard working council officers who facilitate our election processes and all the candidates who participated in the by-elections.

Turning to an individual who has been front and centre as we build this Fairer Newham, I want to express my profound gratitude and appreciation to a remarkable individual who has served the London Borough of Newham with unwavering dedication and commitment.

As we begin the transition with the appointment of our new permanent Chief Executive, I wish to acknowledge the invaluable role played by Colin Ansell during his tenure as our Interim Chief Executive.

Colin stepped into this challenging role during a critical time for our borough, and he did so with a sense of duty and enthusiasm that inspired us all.

His steadfast leadership and wealth of experience have been instrumental in guiding our council through various challenges and opportunities.

Throughout his tenure, Colin has exemplified the very best of public service, displaying a deep understanding of the needs and aspirations of our community.

He has shown a remarkable ability to collaborate in his public service duty councillors, officers and stakeholders; fostering a sense of unity and shared purpose to benefit the people of Newham.

Under Colin's guidance, we have witnessed significant progress in various areas, from enhancing our community engagement to implementing innovative strategies to address the evolving needs of our residents.

His dedication to improving the lives of those we serve has left a lasting impact on our borough.

Colin, on behalf of the London Borough of Newham, I want to extend our sincerest thanks for your exceptional service and wish you continued success in all your future endeavours.

Your contributions will forever be etched in the fabric of our community, and your dedication will continue to inspire us as we move forward.

At the heart of public service lies the essence of ethics – the moral compass that guides us in all our endeavours.

Ethics is not just a mere set of rules to follow; it is the very fabric of our character, the embodiment of our conscience, and the reflection of our deepest convictions.

As elected representatives, we bear the immense responsibility of shaping the lives of our constituents. This responsibility requires us to be guided by unwavering integrity, empathy, and compassion.

In our journey towards a fairer and more inclusive Newham, it is essential that we remain steadfast in these values.

They are more than just slogans or rhetoric; they are the embodiment of our vision for a society where everyone has the opportunity to flourish and fulfil their potential.

And as a Labour Mayor and administration, our values of fairness, equality, and social justice are the pillars upon which we build a community that leaves no one behind.

As Newham's directly elected Mayor, I carry with me the collective hopes and aspirations of our residents.

The trust they have placed in me is a sacred bond, one that I hold dear in every decision I make.

That's why for Newham to thrive, we must uphold the principles of transparency, accountability, and good governance in every action we take.

We must never forget that we are here to serve, to listen and to learn from the diverse voices of our community.

Our borough is a tapestry of cultures, experiences, and dreams that come together to create something truly extraordinary.

In our pursuit of a fairer Newham, we must also acknowledge the power of education and empowerment.

By providing our residents with access to quality education and training, we unlock their potential and pave the way for brighter futures.

Education is not just about acquiring knowledge; it is about empowering individuals to lead purposeful lives and contribute meaningfully to society.

That's why I am pleased to announce that next week, we will be publishing details of our collaboration with the University of East

London which will lead to some £1 million of investment in our flagship Stratford Youth Zone for the benefit of our young people.

As we move forward, let us be guided by the conviction that we can overcome any obstacle.

We have the power to turn challenges into opportunities and adversity into resilience.

Together, we can build a Newham where hope is not just a fleeting dream, but a tangible reality for all.

In conclusion, let us never lose sight of the profound impact our actions have on the lives of our residents.

Let us always remember the responsibility we bear as public servants.

To act with integrity, empathy, compassion and honesty.

For my own political group, I know our Labour values are not just political slogans; they are the embodiment of our commitment to a fairer, more just, and more inclusive Newham.

Thank you.