

## **Statement from *Newham Concern*:**

# **Official: Tablighi Jamaat is using the mega-mosque site without planning permission**

## **“Significant risk“ from heavy soil contamination on the site**

At a meeting of Newham Council on 3 December 2007 it was officially confirmed that Tablighi Jamaat (TJ) does not have any current planning permission for the 18 acre West Ham site of their proposed mega-mosque.

Although TJ's small temporary mosque on the site is in regular - almost daily - use, Newham's Mayor Sir Robin Wales verified at the Council meeting that the previous planning permission for the site had run out. This happened over a year ago on 31 October 2006; TJ has been using the site illegally ever since.

The seriousness of the situation is compounded by a March 2007 report on the site by contamination experts Waterman Environmental. The site was formerly a chemical works and the report states (pages 8 and 9) that the ground is suffering considerable contamination from toxic metals (such as mercury, arsenic and lead), acidity, sulphur compounds, mineral oil, poly aromatic hydrocarbons, asbestos fibres and significant levels of organic contaminants.

Waterman (page 21) classifies the environmental risk from the contamination as “medium-high” and the risk to current site users as “potentially significant”.

Although some remedial action has been taken recently by TJ to mitigate the risk, the disturbing situation is that they have a seriously contaminated site that is in regular use by the public without the necessary statutory authorisation or planning permission.

Newham Council has a duty of care towards the public and should take urgent enforcement action to rectify the situation, especially as TJ continue to use the site illegally and irresponsibly.

