

For Immediate Release: 25 October 2007

Executive Mayor of Newham challenged to compulsory purchase Olympics mega-mosque site

Mosque promoters Tablighi Jamaat “have track record of irresponsibility and illegality” says Cllr Alan Craig

At the forthcoming full meeting of Newham Council on Monday evening (29th October) Cllr Alan Craig, leader of the Christian Peoples Alliance group, will challenge the executive Mayor of Newham, Sir Robin Wales, to arrange the compulsory purchase of the mega-mosque site at West Ham.

Cllr Craig will propose that, in view of Islamic sect Tablighi Jamaat’s track record of irresponsibility and illegality at the site, the Mayor should liaise with the relevant statutory authorities such as the Olympic Delivery Authority with a view bringing the site into community ownership as soon as possible.

Cllr Craig will further propose that the 18 acre site should then be developed as an Olympic legacy location containing an attractive community leisure facility along the lines of Atlanta’s 21 acre *Olympic Park & Fountain of Rings*.

“Over recent years Tablighi Jamaat have ignored planning regulations, breached building control, broken a formal Memorandum of Agreement with Newham Council and not dealt adequately with the health risk from the highly contaminated soil,” said Cllr Craig.

“They have a lamentable track record of irresponsibility and illegality. Clearly Tablighi Jamaat are not fit to build and manage a major landmark mosque – or indeed any other large building. In addition there is growing local opposition to the mega-mosque. The Mayor must act now.

“Newham is the lead Host Borough for the 2012 Olympics. The Council should take the lead on this key site which stands beside a major access point to the Olympic stadium,” said Cllr Craig.

“The site should become a place which brings people together and which all local communities can use after the Olympics are over.”

ENDS

Editors Notes:

- (i) **Queries:** Cllr Alan Craig 0207 476 5381
- (ii) **Full text of Cllr Craig's Question to the Mayor, Sir Robin Wales:**

Mega-mosque site at West Ham

The trustees of the site of Tablighi Jamaat's proposed mega-mosque at West Ham have:

- Erected buildings on site without planning permission and in breach of building control, despite serious and clear warnings from Council officers;
- Almost entirely failed to fulfil the terms of the five year Memorandum of Agreement solemnly entered into with the Council;
- Until forced by my Freedom of Information request of July 2007, failed to publish or warn the public about their March 2007 Waterman Environmental contamination survey which alarmingly indicated the environmental risk of the site as "medium/high", and the risk to current site users from the highly contaminated soils as "potentially significant";
- Continued to use the site on a daily basis despite the expiration twelve months ago of their temporary planning permission.

In view of this track record of irresponsibility and illegality, does the Mayor agree that the trustees have demonstrated that they are not fit to erect and manage a large landmark mosque or indeed any other major building?

Does he further agree that the Council, in conjunction with the ODA, the LDA and the LTGDC as appropriate, should now become directly involved with the future of this key 18 acre site by immediately preparing a masterplan for the site as a community leisure facility that will be a lasting legacy of the Olympics along the lines of Atlanta's 21 acre *Olympic Park & Fountain of Rings*, and/or for residential, recreational and retail purposes, with a view to the site being compulsorily purchased as soon as possible?