

# STRATFORD 'An Olympic Legacy'

## Part 1 – The Promise



“ I bid for the Olympics because its the only way to get billions of pounds out of the Government to develop the East End – to clean the soil, put in the infrastructure and build the housing. ”

Ken Livingstone, former Mayor of London (2000-2008)

As per the Contemporary Urban Environments topic, historically speaking, Stratford was a heavily industrial area of London, with a high working immigrant population. As with many surrounding areas, from the 1970s onwards, deindustrialisation occurred and urban decline followed. Newham has for many years now been one of the worst performing of London's 32 boroughs.

The promise that Livingstone made was to fully rejuvenate Stratford and its surroundings, bringing it back to its former glory, through his Olympic Bid and subsequent London Legacy Development Corporation, who oversaw the massive (and still ongoing) changes that occurred from 2005 onwards.

The GLA (Greater London Authority), at the time, sought five main legacy promises:

1. Increasing opportunities for Londoners to become involved in sport.
2. Ensuring Londoners benefit from new jobs, businesses, and volunteering opportunities
3. Transforming the heart of East London
4. Delivering a sustainable event and creating sustainable communities
5. Showcasing London as a diverse, creative, and welcoming city.



In 2008, the outspoken, outgoing Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, made a bold and controversial revelation.

He stated that bidding for Britain's flagship sporting event, the London 2012 Olympic Games, was entirely his idea so as to force the Government to 'redevelop and rejuvenate' London's deprived East End, specifically Stratford, within the London Borough Of Newham.

### Evening Standard. WEBSITE OF THE YEAR

News  
**Ken Livingstone admits he only bid for 2012 Olympics to 'ensnare' taxpayer billions to develop East End**

#### 3.2.2.2 >> Place Meaning & Representation

### 'Part-Recap' Activity # 1 :

"Using the above material, others and/or your own knowledge, evaluate how an external agency, such as the Media, may have presented Stratford and its initial spout of investment before the Olympic Games."  
 [4 Marks]

What to consider:

- How is Stratford and the Olympics being presented?
- What reasons would they have for this?
- What kind of actions are they trying to influence?

*Helpful Tip:* Consider the endogenous and exogenous factors at work to help build these stereotypes. Don't forget to look at the Stratford – Endogenous / Exogenous document on the [geographyportal.co.uk/changingplaces](http://www.geographyportal.co.uk/changingplaces)

#### A Short Exemplar:

Stratford is in Newham, one of London's most deprived boroughs in the East-End. In order to appreciate how external agencies such as the media have influenced place perception, we need to understand driving factors behind these. As with the Evening Standard, a conservative, right-leaning newspaper, this would probably be so as to further their political agenda and sell more units. Ken Livingstone went against this, and so by having opinionated language such as 'ensnare taxpayer billions' they are able to not only score political points in their favor, but also – knowing their target market would disapprove of Livingstone's policy – gain readership with such a catchy article. The article seems to make a point that urban regeneration and the Olympics are mutually exclusive. This has the indirect effect of making a place such as Stratford seem slightly out-of-touch or purposeless, as if spending money on the Olympics in a deprived area is seen as a sinkhole of taxpayers' money. Generally this will enforce a negative stereotype of the place, which ended up not entirely being accurate – given that there should be numerous factors at play influencing place perception.

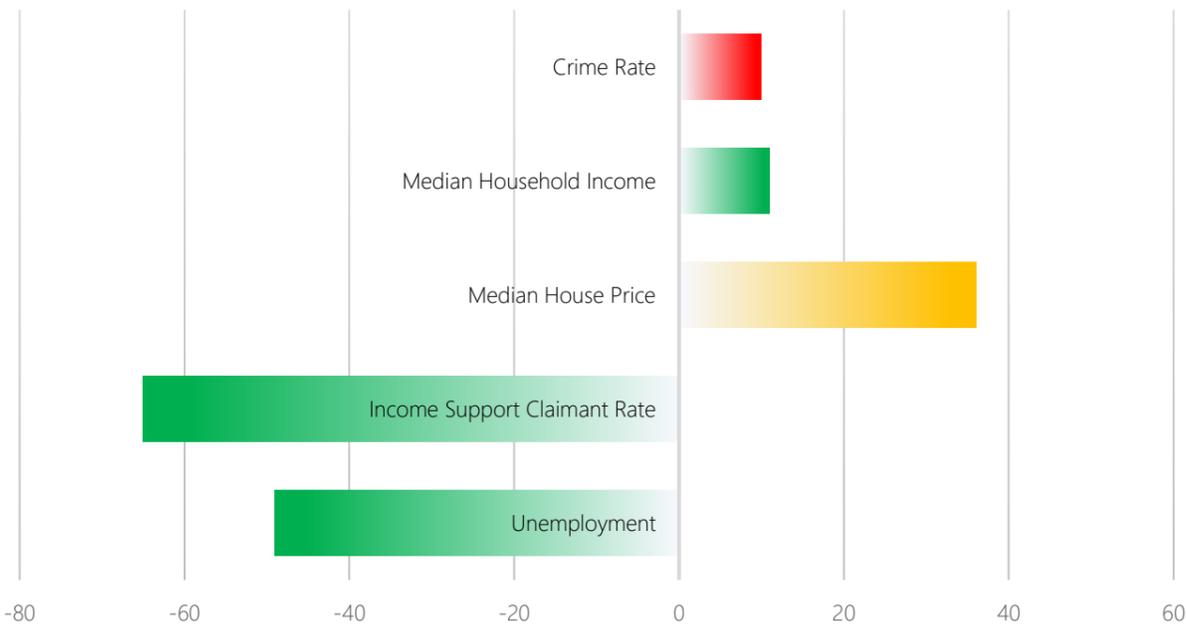
Statistics 2008	Newham London	Performance Out Of /32 Boroughs
Unemployment Rate (16-64)	9.7%	29/32
Income Support Claimant Rate	9.3%	28/32
Median House Price	£236,000	22/32
Foreign Residents Rate	49.1%	29/32
Median Household Income (2007/2008)	£27,700	32/32
Crime Rate / 1000 Residents (2007/2008)	133.1	25/32

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Don't forget that positive factors can be negative, too – and vice versa. Nothing is absolute and different people can have different viewpoints on the same thing.

**% CHANGE OF CERTAIN STATISTICAL METRICS**  
(2008-2020 OR OTHERWISE NEAREST)



Although not explicitly a direct result of the Olympic Development Legacy, the left-hand chart shows some of the previous page's metrics which have been edited to show their change since 2008, accompanied by a colour-coded success grading. **Over £9 Billion has since been directly invested.** These results could have been influenced at least in part by Stratford's subsequent redevelopment and investment flows resulting in a large positive multiplier effect.

## Part 2 – The Positives

PLACE PERCEPTION = think about the Games' Legacy on an outsider place perspective of Stratford!

Key Timeline Of The Olympic Games' Direct Positive Legacy



3.2.2.1 >> Endogenous & Exogenous Factors contributing to the character of Places.

### Activity #2:

Step 1: Make a list of the named successes from Stratford's Olympic Legacy

Step 2: Think about which ones are most important. Maybe rank them as such and add useful information and facts for a select few examples.

Step 3: Start either colour-coding or categorising these factors – by SEE(P). I.E. has this legacy had a 'Social / Economic / Environmental / (Political)' benefit. They can be more than one each.

[A\* Analysis] THINK! Overall which of these categories has been changed the most directly and indirectly?

#### Useful Links Box:

- <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning/implementing-london-plan/planning-guidance/olympic-legacy>
- <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/a-2bn-vision-of-stratford-after-the-games-8138864.html>
- <https://www.newham.info/quick-profile/?geographyId=e37bdf41f276460e881fe1d9bb27270e&featureId=E05000492>
- <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ucl-east/>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-14022954>
- <https://www.trustforlondon.org.uk/data/boroughs/newham-poverty-and-inequality-indicators/>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2008/jun/02/olympics2012>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2016/aug/03/london-olympic-legacy-stratford-suburb-on-steroids>

# STRATFORD

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### Part 3 – The Negatives



#### 2007 : Demolition Of Clay's Lane Housing Estate

Constructed in 1977, this somewhat infamous estate was one of the first casualties of the Olympic Park redevelopments. 450 affordable apartments and council houses made way for part of the Olympic Park and residents displaced about the community, many of which were unable to afford adequate new housing.



#### 2008 - 2011 + : Construction & Opening Of Westfield Stratford City

Although lauded as an economic sense in the sense that it has brought over £2 billion in direct value added, it is also valuable to mention that the opening of Westfield had a negative impact on independent traders in the old Stratford Centre and along the historic high street and along with 'rising business rates' has led to a decline in some aspects of the town atmosphere.



#### Summer 2012 : The London Olympic Games



#### 2012 - 2013 : Focus E15 Hostel Evictions & Carpenter's Estate Demolition Plans

Several single mothers were served eviction notices after the Focus E15 Hostel, for those who had been made homeless partly due to demolition of council estates and residual poverty, had its funding removed. A lack in council housing in the borough of Newham meant that they were slated for rehousing in other areas of the city - so they took matters into their own hands and occupied a derelict but functional house in Carpenter's Estate, which had been earmarked for demolition (to make way for a now-cancelled UCL East Campus Extension.) Their campaign resulted in national attention, becoming a symbol for the so-called 'social cleansing' taking place around the borough and capital as a whole. Carpenter's Lane estate itself has been partially boarded up for years, despite no work taking place - a symbol in its own right of the council's immense hypocrisy given the current nationwide housing crisis.

Non-specific dated events, which are mostly still ongoing and pose issues, not necessarily directly because of the Olympics, but certainly do not fit with the **five-point legacy strategy** include the following:

- **Crime Rates & Security** – Newham is still one of the highest-crime boroughs in London, with many gangs operating out of unrenovated or down-at-heel estates, which are farther from the Olympic Park and hence have not been 'cleaned-up' as with the centre of Stratford.
- **Business Rents & Rates** – Unfortunately for many locals operating small businesses and shops, the arrival of TNCs and large developers to the area has significantly driven up rents and rates for stores and offices in the town, which has led to a decline in culture and uniqueness, with Stratford now possessing more 'clone town qualities' and a Chain to Independent store ratio of over 2/1.
- **Economic Concerns** – The borough of Newham still has higher than average poverty rates, especially among Children (around 33%) as well as low median incomes, which suggests not everyone has reaped the benefits from the redevelopment. Average incomes specifically have only increased by around £2500 since 2008, despite a large influx of wealthier citizens, mostly into the new apartment blocks, which can fetch up to £700 000 per 3-bedroom apartment. Only 20% of jobs due to developments have ended up going to locals.
- **Housing Prices** – There are concerns that many locals have been 'outriced' from their own neighbourhoods, even if they haven't been demolished, due to the rapidly increasing house-prices in the area, up over 30% since 2008.

CAN YOU THINK OF ANY OTHER FACTORS WHICH MAY HAVE BEEN NEGATIVELY IMPACTED?

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## Part 4 – Judgement

Sometimes using facts, stats, data (and even quotes!) is a great way to weigh up the successes and failures of a large-scale scheme such as the Olympics on Stratford.

It is particularly important to note that by making a judgement on this topic is hard, so don't worry if at first it seems difficult to decide where you stand.

This is also a very subjective topic. As you're probably aware, different people of different social and political viewpoints may see the successes in a different light to one another. Let's use the below cases (*they are fictitious but of real circumstances*) as an example, so maybe you can have a better understanding of where you stand on this issue.

The García Family, new tenants at the East Village Development think that:

"We don't get why so many of the locals have an issue with the Olympics legacy. It's making such a noticeable difference to the quality of the life you can understand the new influx of people. Its demand and supply – gentrification – the nicer an area becomes the higher the prices are the more people want to live there. This will over time benefit everyone in a 'trickle down effect'- after all, the new residents are spending significantly more in and around Stratford than how it used to be. Its' clearly a win/win."

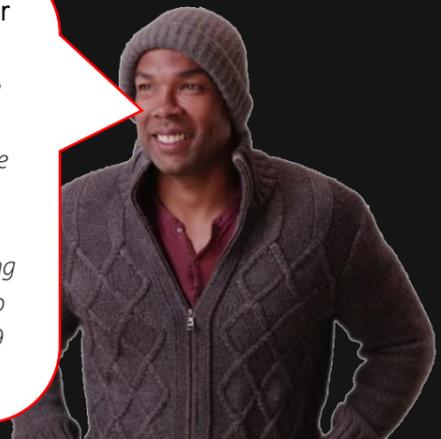


Rajdeep, a developer from Birmingham on their new housing project in Stratford thinks that:

"For me, as a developer, I have to balance the wishes of the locals and council as well as our finances as best as possible. We are mandated to provide at least 50% affordable housing, which to me seems more than enough. We also need to encourage new minds to Stratford and get its industry back up to speed again, after the Olympics have come and gone. That means enticing young, experienced professionals from outside, to widen the talent pool in the area. This has meant there is big demand and that drives up prices. We need to make money, too – all this construction costs a lot of money to us – so we want the best returns on our investment."

Travis, a local from Carpenter's Estate and member of the Newham Labour Party thinks that:

"The developments in Stratford have been two-faced. For me, it's bittersweet. The Olympics were a while now and there have been many more opportunities for the locals and I really appreciate the new green environments, but at the same time I've lost my house and community. I know people who've been forced out to Barnet, Upminster or Tower Hamlets due to the ridiculous rent and rate increases and my house was compulsorily purchased for a new campus that doesn't seem to be getting built. I don't see that as really benefiting anyone's lived experience of the area. To me this whole project has been mostly a large waste of money – why not spend £9 Billion on improving people's lives DIRECTLY."



3.2.2.WHOLE >> Place Study Overview & Judgment

### Activity #3:

Write out the solution to a hypothetical 20-mark exam question with the title:

"Examine how rebranding and reimagining processes have changed the lived experience in your far place case study"

[20 Mks]

Helpful Tip (What to consider)

- What are the key words the question is actually saying?  
'Examine = Study the +ves and -ves and weigh them up from what you've learnt here.  
'Rebranding and reimagining = changing a place's appearance, not necessarily the same as redevelopment.'  
'Lived Experience' = how people in Stratford (new or local) view the changes that have occurred.