In early July, anti-poverty charity Elizabeth Finn Care played co-host with Total Politics at a reception in Parliament to introduce the findings of its joint research with the London School of Economics into the Olympic promise of regeneration.

Will London 2012 provide a lasting legacy? Will it alleviate the hitherto deprived Olympic boroughs, planned or merely represented as missed opportunity, leaving these areas with the same burdens as they carried prior to the Games?

The study, led by Professor Anne Power CBE of the LSE, focused on the borough of Newham. Power has been working on housing and social problems in Newham since the 1980s, and earlier this year began an investigation into the area’s condition pre-2005, the year of the successful Olympic bid.

The full report will compare the area’s health of the borough prior to the Games to that of the year following the closing ceremony, using figures from the CNI, GLA, the Census and others.

The research team are also talking to “people on the ground” in the borough, led by Power, who asserts that “there is something to be upbeat about” despite there being “no easy route forward” in a place where social problems are very hard to eradicate.

Initial findings show that there has been a vast improvement in education and transport since 2005, with Newham overtaking the national average of pupils achieving 5 GCSEs A*-C, and “measurable improvements” to the DLR, buses and railways, according to the LSE’s findings.

Power was “deeply impressed with the work done in Newham schools in the build-up to the Olympics” and railways, according to the LSE’s findings.

Power admits that unemployment remains a stubborn sticking point. “The job recruitment for the London Olympics hasn’t been what it should be.” Although Newham basked the national trend by increasing its new enterprises in 2008–11, it has seen more than double the London average rise in unemployment; 44 per cent from 2005–10.

Wales is aiming to solve this. “This year so far,” he explains, “we’ve placed 5,000 of Newham’s long-term unemployment in work, but need 20,000 placed to reach the London average.”

Newham remains the UK’s second most deprived area, and its crime rate – though still more than double the London average – continues to be. “Although Newham bucked the national trend by increasing its new enterprises in 2008–11, it has seen more than double the London average rise in unemployment; 44 per cent from 2005–10.

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Newham remains the UK’s second most deprived area, and its crime rate – though total crimes have fallen – continues to be more than double the London average.

Despite these intimidating obstacles, with the Olympics as its focus the borough is swiftly changing, and Wales is positive about the future: “From the Olympics, we’ve gained the concept of convergence. We’re going to achieve the London average on housing, schools and jobs in one of the poorest places in the country.”

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