

News Release



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AN ERA ENDS WITH NEW BEGINNINGS IN LONDON DOCKLANDS

The London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC) today (26 March 1998) marks the completion of its regeneration remit in East London by formally handing on its responsibilities in the Royal Docks to its successors and, at the same time, launching the construction of the University of East London's new £40 million London Docklands Campus - the first new campus to be built in the Capital for 50 years.

The transition of powers from the LDDC to successors, English Partnerships and the London Borough of Newham (LBN), was witnessed by Richard Caborn MP, Minister for the Regions, Regeneration and Planning, who also officially initiated construction of the new campus on the north side of the Royal Albert Dock by breaking the ground with a mechanical digger and unveiling a giant poster.

The LDDC officially ceases operation at midnight, 31 March 1998, bringing to a close 17 years of regeneration activity in London's former port area. Responsible since July 1981 for the renewal of an area of 8½ sq. miles (5,500 acres) stretching from London Bridge to Surrey Docks peninsula on the south side of the Thames and Tower Bridge to Beckton on the north, the LDDC has been progressively handing on its responsibilities since 1994.

Development control in the last remaining area, the Royal Docks, has now passed to LBN while LDDC's land holdings and contractual obligations will be handed on to English Partnerships at midnight, Tuesday, 31 March 1998.



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Mirroring similar arrangements made in the Isle of Dogs, the LDDC, with LBN, has expanded a charitable trust originally set up for Beckton in 1994, providing a further £1.5 million to the original £1.2 million endowment to secure a long term source of funding for community projects across the whole of Newham Docklands.

The Corporation is also making substantial financial contributions to a number of projects in Newham Docklands, notably £5.2 million towards the cost of the new secondary school in Prince Regent Lane, £700,000 towards the cost of a new primary school at West Silvertown and £940,000 towards the costs of new leisure facilities at North Woolwich and Silvertown. These payments are in part the last tranche of investment by the Corporation in community infrastructure under the Memorandum of Agreement with the Council signed in 1987 and in part offsets to the revenue costs to be incurred by the Council in taking over the Corporation's public realm and structures such as bridges and river walls.

Sir Michael Pickard, LDDC Chairman, said: "The London Docklands Development Corporation leaves a legacy of imaginative development and achievement. An area which was economically devastated by the closure of the docks 30 years ago and abandoned by the rest of London has been rejuvenated far beyond most people's expectations. This once derelict and neglected area can again proudly play its role in maintaining London as a world class city."

Cllr Conor McAuley, Newham's Deputy Leader, said: "Newham is poised for success as the place to be in the new Millennium. As the Council takes over the mantle of the Royals alongside English Partnerships, we are determined to see through the regeneration of the area in line with our vision for the whole Borough."

Sir Idris Pearce, Deputy Chairman of English Partnerships, said: "I look forward to English Partnerships having the opportunity to progress the great work carried out by the LDDC to date. Our future involvement in the Royal Docks in partnership with the London Borough of Newham, together with our major schemes in Greenwich, will be crucial to the future success of East London and the Thames Gateway. We will continue to encourage this success through the provision of new serviced sites and complementary mixed use regeneration in this most vital quarter of the Capital."

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NOTE TO EDITORS

1. London Docklands - 17 Years of Achievement

- **85,000 people work in London Docklands (1981: 27,200) in 2,690 businesses (1981: 1,000).**
- **83,000 people live in the area (1981: 39,400).**
- **25.1 million sq. ft of commercial and industrial space has been built including 13 million sq. ft of office space which is now 92% let (Canary Wharf is 98% let).**
- **Public investment of £1.859 billion through the LDDC has been matched by £7.2 billion from the private sector.**
- **More than 24,000 new homes have been built, home ownership is 45% (1981: 5%). The LDDC has helped fund refurbishment and improvement to 8,000 Council homes.**
- **Of the 2,173 acres owned by the Corporation since 1981, 417 acres are water, 550 acres have been set aside for roads, transport and landscaping and 1,061 acres have been sold for development, leaving 145 acres to be disposed of.**
- **Transport infrastructure has been radically improved. The area is served by:**
 - **The Docklands Light Railway, opened 1987 linking Tower Bridge to Island Gardens and Stratford. It has since been extended to Bank and Beckton. An extension to Lewisham will open in January 2000. By that time, the original 6.5 miles of railway will have been extended to 16 miles.**
 - **55 miles of new and improved roads, including the Limehouse Link Tunnel.**
 - **London City Airport, serving 20 European and UK destinations and now carrying over 1 million passengers a year.**

The Jubilee Line Underground Extension linking Green Park and Stratford, via London Bridge and Canary Wharf, will open in Spring 1999.

- **The LDDC has helped fund:**
 - **11 new primary schools**
 - **2 new secondary schools**
 - **3 new post-16 colleges**
 - **extensions or refurbishment at 12 further schools/colleges**
 - **9 vocational training centres**
 - **5 new health centres**
 - **6 existing health centres refurbished**

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- 160,000 trees have been planted, 18 conservation areas created and 500 buildings listed.
- London Docklands has won 94 awards for design, planning and conservation.
- 2.1 million people visited London Docklands in 1997.

2. LDDC Completion of Remit

Bermondsey Riverside passed to the London Borough of Southwark in October 1994; Beckton to Newham in December 1995; Surrey Docks to Southwark in December 1996; Wapping and Limehouse to Tower Hamlets in January 1997; the Isle of Dogs to Tower Hamlets and the dock estate to British Waterways in October 1997. Development control in the Royal Docks passed to Newham on 24 March 1998.

Two key inner city ecology parks created by the LDDC, Bow Creek Ecology Park and East India Dock Basin Bird Sanctuary were transferred to the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority at midnight, 24 March 1998, creating a link between the Rivers Lee and Thames as envisaged in the Abercrombie Plan for London 50 years ago.

The event on Thursday, 26 March 1998 marks the passing of regeneration responsibilities to English Partnerships working with the London Borough of Newham. With effect from midnight, 31 March 1998 LDDC land holdings and contractual obligations in the Royal Docks pass to English Partnerships.

The Commission for the New Towns (CNT) assumes responsibility for other Corporation liabilities and assets along with the LDDC's strategic highways and tunnels in Tower Hamlets: the Limehouse Link Tunnel, Aspen Way, Preston's Road flyover, East India Dock Tunnel and their associated sliproads.

3. English Partnerships

English Partnerships is the Government's Regeneration Agency for England. Its task is to regenerate derelict, vacant and under-used land and buildings in partnership with public, private and voluntary sector organisations to transform areas of need into quality places for people to live and work, whilst delivering regeneration, economic development, job creation and environmental improvement.