

News Release

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NEW SOCIAL HOUSING STRATEGY UNVEILED

Comments are invited by the London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC) on its new Housing Strategy Review, which has been agreed by the LDDC Board.

The document outlines a range of proposals for providing rented and other low cost housing opportunities in the LDDC area to meet the needs of lower and middle income households who are not able to buy at market prices or rent homes at market rents. It sets out the costs and requirements for subsidising a programme for building 2000 new homes and also for assisting the three Docklands boroughs with the refurbishment of their council housing within the LDDC area.

This is the first housing strategy that the Corporation has developed in consultation with the local boroughs, which fully takes into account the boroughs' assessments of local housing need.

Elizabeth Filkin, LDDC Director of Community Services, said: "I hope that this innovative and far reaching review will be widely welcomed. We have worked hard with the three Docklands boroughs to establish a

more/....

programme for improving the homes of existing tenants within the LDDC area, as part of our regenerative role and want to help the boroughs in meeting their broader housing needs".

Copies of the review have been sent to a number of organisations including the Docklands boroughs, tenants associations, housing associations and local interest groups.

For further information, and copies of the review, contact:

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HOUSING STRATEGY REVIEW

Summary

INTRODUCTION

The objectives of the new review were to examine the London Docklands Development Corporation's (LDDC) housing role and to develop a strategy for social housing as part of the Corporation's overall regenerative role.

KEY ELEMENTS IN THE NEW LDDC SOCIAL HOUSING STRATEGY ARE:

- to ensure the provision of housing which can be afforded by households in housing need
- that the LDDC will seek Housing Corporation grant to Housing Associations at an equivalent level to LDDC grant to split capital costs on the new build programme. A target of 2000 new rented and low cost home ownership homes has been set
- that the LDDC will explore all avenues of alternative public and private sector resources to assist the boroughs in refurbishing Council housing within the Urban Development Area
- that the LDDC will assist employers in providing housing for key workers to contribute towards the LDDC's employment objectives
- these programmes will be developed in conjunction with local authorities, housing associations, tenants associations and local community organisations

- that the LDDC's 1989/90 budget already includes £20.5m for funding of a 469 unit housing association new build scheme on the Winsor Park site in Beckton and a £4.2m refurbishment programme. This comprises £2.5m for the refurbishment of the Roche Estate, £627,000 on environmental improvements and £1.132 million on improvements and feasibility studies related to refurbishment on other estates.

The Review's recommendations make it clear that the LDDC sees housing associations as the development vehicles for delivering future rented and shared ownership property in Docklands.

PROPOSED SOCIAL HOUSING PROGRAMME

The proposed programme for new social housing - on the assumption that public sector funding comes equally from the LDDC and the Housing Corporation - breaks down as follows:

- * The LDDC will provide land at market value for 200 self build homes
- * Rented homes provided through housing associations at affordable levels:
 - a) Royal Docks: 800 (This is in addition to the Winsor Park Scheme in Beckton)
 - b) Masthouse Terrace Scheme (Isle of Dogs): approx 200
 - c) Smaller sites: up to 200
- * Shared-ownership, including housing for key workers: up to 500
- * Low-cost shared-ownership schemes: up to 100

The timescale for implementing the programme would be dependent on the availability of funds.

BACKGROUND

Some 30 per cent of London's registered homeless are the responsibility of the three boroughs - Southwark, Newham and Tower Hamlets, part of which fall into the London Docklands' Urban Development Area.

Overcrowding within the three boroughs is twice the London average. Only one per cent of households on council waiting lists can afford to buy property on the open market. Three quarters of all households in these boroughs have a net income of less than £250 per week.

Within this total fall almost 3500 elderly households and over 160 disabled residents in need of rehousing, while the area at large has a serious shortage of accommodation for key workers in health, education and a variety of other important public and private sector bodies.

The number of council homes available in Southwark, Newham and Tower Hamlets is in decline. Of those remaining, some 44 per cent are in need of improvements costing £6500 or more each - an estimated total repair bill for council homes within the LDDC area of over £220 million.