

# News Release

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## **PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE REPORT ON URBAN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS**

The Public Accounts Committee's recognition of the London Docklands development Corporation's (LDDC) substantial achievements in restoring confidence and attracting private investment to Docklands has been welcomed by LDDC Chief Executive, Michael Honey.

Commenting on the Public Accounts Committee's (PAC) report on Urban Development Corporations, published today, Michael Honey said: "I am encouraged by the Committee's recognition that the scale and speed of development in Docklands has been remarkable. In 1981 this was - in the Committee's own words - an area which displayed more acutely than any other area in England the physical decline of the inner city and the need for urban regeneration.

"The progress continues apace: the latest figures show £6.85 billion of private investment committed, 11,000 new houses completed, 0.81 million sq metres (8.7 million sq feet) of industrial and commercial floorspace already built and - by 1987 - 20,000 new jobs. In a 15 - 20 year period a new city, the size of Oxford, is being created in Docklands. The number of people employed here will exceed the working population of Bristol, or more than half the jobs provided by the City of London.

"The LDDC shares the Committee's and developers' concerns to improve access as quickly as possible to and from the area, both by public and private transport. The LDDC's own strategic highway schemes are now at an advanced stage, with major contracts due to be let (for Limehouse Link and Lower Lea Crossing) this autumn, subject to statutory procedures. In the Royals, the Eastern Gateway Access Road will also open in the autumn. The DLR (Beckton extension) Bill will, it is hoped, complete its Parliamentary process shortly and the Corporation intends that construction should begin at the earliest possible stage thereafter. We welcome Michael Portillo's recent announcement of support for the Docklands second line, and we are in constant and close touch with the Department of Transport about its programmes for regional transport improvements.

"We are in full accord with the emphasis placed by the PAC on creating more opportunities and benefits for local people. LDDC's plans to help local people to take advantage of the benefits of regeneration are now well defined. Through agreements with Newham and Tower Hamlets Councils, and through programmes covering education and training, housing improvements and a wide range of community support projects, we are determined that local people should share in the economic transformation which is now taking place. We are implementing schemes on all these fronts and are in discussion with all the various local and statutory bodies with a view to encouraging and assisting them to provide the essential public services which the new resident and working population will require.

"As I told the Committee hearing, relationships between the LDDC and the local authorities continue to improve. With the Borough Councils' approval, we hope shortly to

finalise and publish a new code of practice concerning consultation with local and other statutory bodies. Our processes for informing and consulting the local communities are also under active review and we will seek to strengthen these on a number of fronts in order to secure full participation by local people in the regeneration process.

"The Corporation has responded fully to the Committee's concerns about such matters as land disposals, valuations and the appointment of consultants. A number of procedural changes have been implemented and other matters have been, and will continue to be, reviewed in order to ensure that the proper concerns of public accountability and value for money are met."

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