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Docklands visionary Reg Ward, 1927-2011

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Tributes have been paid to Reg Ward, the man credited with driving the transformation of London's Docklands in the 1980s.

Reg Ward, who has died aged 83, was chief executive of the London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC) from 1981-87 and devised and saw through the plans for Canary Wharf, the DLR, City Airport, the Royal Docks, Surrey Quays and the ExCeL Centre.

The powerful but controversial LDDC was set up by Tory minister Michael Heseltine in 1981 in response to the drastic economic decline of the docks. Its remit extended into three boroughs which, along with the Greater London Council, had been unable to revive the area.

While the councils resented his appointment, he is now viewed as the main driver behind the extraordinary change and development in Docklands, said David Donoghue, the LDDC's former director of communications.

"From the outset it was clear that his vision was far and away more ambitious than the original expectations of some decent houses and a few small work premises," he recalled.

"Thousands of jobs and homes have been delivered together with massive infrastructure and transport benefits."

Heseltine said: "His energy was proverbial, his imagination huge... Reg made a great contribution to the redevelopment of the East End. We owe him a great debt."

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