

REPORT

FROM THE

SELECT COMMITTEE OF
THE HOUSE OF LORDS

ON THE

LONDON DOCKLANDS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (AREA AND CONSTITUTION) ORDER 1980

London Docklands Development Corporation (Area and Constitution) Order 1980

Friday the 5th of June 1981

By the Committee appointed to consider whether in the light of the matters complained of in the Petitions against the London Docklands Development Corporation (Area and Constitution) Order 1980, the area specified in the Order should be designated as an urban development area under Part XVI of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980.

ORDERED TO REPORT:—

Preliminary

1.1. The Committee were appointed on 3rd February 1981 to consider whether in the light of the matters complained of in the Petitions against the London Docklands Development Corporation (Area and Constitution) Order 1980, the area specified in the Order should be designated as an urban development area under Part XVI of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980. The following peers were named of the Committee, Lord Cross of Chelsea (Chairman), Lord Airedale, Lord Amptill, Lord Nugent of Guildford and Lord Underhill.

1.2 The Order was laid before the House on 27th November 1980. On 2nd December 1980 the Chairman of Committees reported that, in his opinion, the Order was hybrid and that petitions might be deposited against it. On 27th January 1981 the Hybrid Instruments Committee met to consider, in accordance with Private Business Standing Order 216, eleven Petitions deposited against the Order. That Committee found that all but one of the Petitioners, the National Association of Local Government Officers, had *locus standi* and recommended that there should be a further enquiry by a Select Committee into the matters complained of in the Petitions.

1.3 As a result, the following Petitions were referred to this Committee:—

1. Newham Chamber of Commerce.
2. Newham Voluntary Agencies Council.
3. Greater London Council.
4. Mrs. Anne King.
5. Bermondsey Forum;
North Southwark Community Development Group;
Mayflower Tenants' Association;
Southwark Docklands Campaign;
Surrey Docks Child Care Project.
6. Tower Hamlets Trades Council;
Southwark Trades Council;
West Ham Trades Council;

7. Association of Wapping Organisations;
Stephen and Matilda Tenants' Co-operative;
South Quay Tenants' Association;
Limehouse Development Group.
8. Newham, Southwark and Tower Hamlets Borough Councils.
9. Association of Island Communities.
London Bridge Properties Limited;
London Bridge Developments Limited;
St. Martin's Property Investments Limited.

1.4 The Petition of the Proprietors of Hay's Wharf Limited, London Bridge Properties Limited, London Bridge Developments Limited and St. Martin's Property Investments Limited was withdrawn before the Committee met. The Petition of the Greater London Council (GLC) was withdrawn on 18th February, the sixth day of the hearing, during the presentation of the Government's case for the Order, the GLC having received assurances from the Department of the Environment regarding their responsibilities for the construction of the Thames Barrier at Woolwich, the northern end of which falls within the area proposed to be designated as an urban development area (UDA).

1.5 The GLC had asked, *inter alia*, in their Petition that an area of land to the east of Beckton in the London Borough of Newham should be included in the UDA. It appeared to the Committee that the Newham Chamber of Commerce, by their Petition, also asked for the inclusion of this land. Consequently, the Committee had referred to them Petitions of the British Gas Corporation against alteration of the area designated by the Order. Since, however, the GLC withdrew their Petition, and because the Chamber of Commerce did not argue the case for inclusion of this area of land, the Committee did not have to consider the Petitions against alteration.

1.6 The Committee began their enquiry on 10th February 1981. They sat on 46 days to hear the cases of the Government and the Petitioners. They visited the London docklands on 13th May, at the conclusion of the hearing, and saw a great part of the area. The visit was based on a programme agreed between the Government and the Petitioners. The Committee have also met to consider their report on a further 3 days.

1.7 They heard evidence called by the Government and by all but two of the Petitioners. Thirty-eight witnesses gave evidence to the Committee, including the Chairman designate of the proposed Urban Development Corporation (UDC).

1.8 The Committee would like to express to all those who appeared before them and to those who organised their visit to the docklands, their appreciation for the help they have given them in this very long enquiry.

1.9 The Committee's attention was drawn to the provisions of the London Bridge Act 1967 which vests the entire structure of London Bridge in the Corporation of the City of London. The western boundary of the prospective UDA is drawn through the middle of the southern half of London Bridge. It could, therefore, be argued that the UDA includes an area of land not wholly or partly within an inner London Borough as required under Section 134 of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980. An alternative construction is, however, that the line is drawn along the river bed and, therefore, below the bridge. The prospective UDC have assured the Corporation of the City of London that, if

established, they will not claim any interest in the bridge and no point as to the vires of the Order was taken on this matter by any of the Petitioners before the Committee. The Committee, therefore, feel that they need do no more than draw this matter to the attention of the House.

1.10 On 6th April the Committee were informed that two vesting orders made under Section 141 of the 1980 Act had been laid before Parliament. These Orders are directed to vesting land owned by the GLC and the Port of London Authority (PLA) in the prospective UDC. They cannot come into operation unless Parliament approves the Order which is the subject of this Report. The Orders themselves were not of concern to the Committee, but they understand that these Orders are also hybrid and that the PLA Order has been petitioned against.

Recent History of the London Docklands

2.1 The London docklands have been in a state of decline since at least the mid-1960s when the upstream docks began to be closed as a result of "containerisation". The East India Dock closed in 1967, St. Katharine Docks and London Docks in 1969 and the Surrey Docks in 1970. The PLA closed its operations in the West India and Millwall Docks in March 1980. The Royal Group of Docks at Silvertown and North Woolwich are still operating on a limited scale, but it is very doubtful whether they will long remain open.

2.2. The future of the London docklands as a whole has been under "containerisation". The East India Dock closed in 1967, St. Katharine Docks ment of the area has been produced. In 1971 the Government and the GLC commissioned a study of the docklands by a firm of consultants, Messrs R. Travers Morgan. For the purpose of the study the docklands area was there defined as an area on the north bank of the Thames stretching from the east of St. Katharine Docks to Barking Creek, including substantial parts of the Boroughs of Newham and Tower Hamlets, and on the south bank as an area covering the Surrey Docks in Southwark, a small part of Lewisham, and the Greenwich peninsula.

2.3. The Travers Morgan study was completed in 1973 and proposed five different schemes for the regeneration of the docklands, none of which was adopted. The Committee did not hear evidence on these schemes.

2.4. In November 1973, the then Secretary of State for the Environment, Mr. Rippon, agreed that the Great London Council and the five London Boroughs, Greenwich, Lewisham, Newham, Southwark and Tower Hamlets, should form a statutory joint committee to plan the development of the docklands. The joint committee would be responsible for the area defined as "docklands" in the Travers Morgan study.

2.5. This Joint Committee was formed under section 102 of the Local Government Act 1972 and came into operation on 1st January 1974. It is still operational although its organisation has been run down in the past years. Its composition has varied, but the Docklands Joint Committee (DJC) now consists of 24 members; eight of these are from the Greater London Council, eight from the five London

Boroughs and eight are co-opted. Four of the co-opted members are nominated by the Secretary of State, one of whom is the Chairman. Of the other four co-opted members, two are representatives of the Docklands Forum, an "umbrella" organisation for trades unions, trades councils, employers' federations and other local groups within the docklands area.

2.6. The DJC is served by its own small staff known as the Docklands Development Organisation (DDO). Between the DDO and the Joint Committee itself is the Officers Steering Group, consisting of senior staff from the GLC and the five boroughs. Above the DJC is the Docklands Executive Committee consisting of the Leaders of the GLC and the five London boroughs, and the Chairman of the DJC.

2.7. In 1978 the then Secretary of State for the Environment, Mr. Shore, instituted a partnership committee between the DJC and the Government, and he himself took the Chair at meetings. Although an official from the Department of the Environment has always attended meetings of the Officers Steering Group, the partnership committee strengthened the link between central government and the local authorities concerned.

2.8. As already mentioned, two of the co-opted members of the DJC are representatives of the Docklands Forum. The Forum is the chief means by which the aspirations and disquiets of residents, local groups and other organisations within the docklands area are made known to the DJC. Approximately forty such organisations are affiliated to the Forum.

2.9. Its constituent local authorities have delegated the DJC the strategic plan-making powers for the area within its jurisdiction. It also has development control for matters likely to have a material impact within the area. The DJC uses the existing planning machinery and administrative framework in the GLC and the five boroughs. Since 1979 the DJC has been the channel through which funds have been allocated to schemes for regeneration such as amenity projects and infrastructure, but not housing. The funds had become available through the Urban Programme.

2.10. In 1976 the DJC, after thorough consultation with local organisations, published a London Docklands Strategic Plan (LDSP), the overall objective of which was as follows:—

To use the opportunity provided by large areas of London's Dockland becoming available to redress the housing, social, environmental, employment/economic and communications deficiencies of the Docklands area and the parent boroughs, and thereby, to provide the freedom for similar improvement throughout East and Inner London.

2.11. The LDSP was a comprehensive strategy for the regeneration of the docklands area over a twenty-year period. It was intended to be implemented in four phases, up to 1982, 1986, 1990 and 1997. It was hoped that as a result of the plan, population, employment and housing would be increased over the twenty-year period. It was envisaged that the population should increase from 56,000 to 100,000-120,000. As far as employment was concerned, it was hoped first to stabilise the existing employment situation and then, by the end of the period of the plan, to provide between 26,000 and 32,000 new jobs. These jobs would be principally in manufacturing industry, replacing the work in the dock-related industry which was in decline.

2.12. The LDSP envisaged that in addition to retaining the majority of the 19,000 existing dwellings in docklands, a further 23,000 would be built over the twenty-year period. The Strategic Plan favoured a move away from the existing pattern of housing, which was predominantly publicly rented, to one where owner occupation would be 20% of the new housing and middle tenure (i.e. equity sharing either with local authorities or housing associations) between 30% and 40%.

2.13. In 1975 the House of Commons Expenditure Committee had considered the future of the London docklands and in particular the value of the DJC. They recommended, although there were arguments in favour of some form of UDC, that since the DJC had only been formed a year previously, it ought to continue as the responsible authority, at least for the time being.

2.14. In 1977, a Docklands Land Board was set up under the Community Land Act 1975 with power to buy and sell land. The Act was repealed by the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980 and the Board was dissolved early in 1980. The Committee understand that during its existence the Board had made little impact.

2.15. In July 1978 the DJC approved and published a Docklands Operational Programme for the first phase of the Strategic Plan, 1978-1982.

2.16. In September 1979 the present Secretary of State for the Environment announced that he would seek legislative approval for powers to appoint urban development corporations and that, if he were successful, one such Corporation would be appointed for the London docklands.

2.17. In December 1979 the DDO recommended to the DJC that the LDSP should be reviewed. This review was carried out by the Managing Director of the DDO and presented to the DJC in May 1980. It proposed a number of changes to the Strategic Plan notably on population, land availability, employment, transport and housing.

2.18. The review indicated that the future population of docklands should be significantly reassessed downwards to about 95,000 by 1997. This was in the light of demographic changes generally. On employment the review suggested that greater emphasis should be given to the range of employment opportunities that exist within the industrial, warehousing and commercial sectors.

2.19. With regard to transport the review recognised that certain major improvement schemes, for instance the extension to the Jubilee Line, were likely to be cut and, therefore, recommended the examination of less expensive schemes.

2.20. The review of housing indicated that the tenure mix guide lines in the Strategic Plan might no longer be attainable or even desirable. It was recommended that these guide lines should be comprehensively reviewed by the officers of the constituent local authorities and the Housing Corporation.

2.21. The findings of the review were opposed by the Docklands Forum. At a meeting of the DJC on 3rd June 1980 it was agreed that no amendment should be made to the LDSP, and that the changes proposed should not be considered for the time being.

2.22. The Secretary of State's announcement on a proposed London Docklands Development Corporation, already referred to, provoked a rapid response. In October 1979 the Leaders of the five London Boroughs in the DJC published a pamphlet called "Local Democracy Works". This pamphlet indicated the main grounds of opposition to an Urban Development Corporation. Local organisations were also strongly opposed to the proposals on grounds which subsequently led them to petition against this Order and to which the Report will refer.

Urban Development Corporations

3.1. The Order referred to this Committee is made under the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980 which was introduced into Parliament in December 1979 and received the Royal Assent in November 1980. The Act provides under Part XVI for the creation of urban development corporations. Under Section, 134 the Secretary of State may, if he thinks it expedient in the national interest, designate as an urban development area (UDA), an area of land lying within a metropolitan district or within an inner London borough or partly in an inner London borough and partly in an outer London borough with an adjacent boundary. The designation of a UDA is made by statutory instrument requiring the affirmative resolution of both Houses of Parliament.

3.2. Under Section 135 an urban development area is subject to the management of an Urban Development Corporation (UDC), whose members are appointed by the Secretary of State and whose purpose is the regeneration of the area (Section 136) by the creation and encouragement of industry, commerce, housing and social facilities. In anticipation of this Order being approved by Parliament, the Secretary of State appointed in February 1980, a Chairman designate of the UDC and a Vice-Chairman designate and in May 1980, a Chief Executive designate. A small office has been established in the Isle of Dogs by the prospective UDC.

3.3. Section 140 provides that within twelve months of its creation a Corporation shall, in consultation with the local authorities, prepare a code of future consultation with the local authorities. Such a code may be revised from time to time.

3.4. Under Section 141 of the Act the Secretary of State is entitled, by order, to vest land owned by a local authority, statutory undertaker or other public body or by a subsidiary of a public body, in the Corporation for development purposes. Under Section 142 the Corporation may itself acquire land within its area, or outside its area where required for the exercise of its functions.

3.5. Under Sections 148 and 149 the Corporation may be given certain planning powers. The Committee were informed that the Corporation will become the planning authority for the docklands, responsible for development control. It will not, however, be the plan-making authority for the area, this function being left to the local authorities. The Committee were also informed that it is intended to limit to a period of three years the Corporation's direct engagement in development.

3.6. Under Schedule 31 the Secretary of State may make available to the Corporation sums of money in respect of its functions. The Committee were told that it is the Secretary of State's intention to make available to the Corporation in

its first year (1981-82) £65 million, of which about half would be used for land acquisition under Section 141 of the Act; the Corporation would also have further finance to cover the cost of acquisition of statutory undertakers' land. The balance of the £65 million would be available for land reclamation, construction work and other purposes designed to regenerate the area, including environmental projects. The Committee were also told that if the UDC were not appointed, the availability of this money would be uncertain, because the UDC is the Secretary of State's chosen instrument for the regeneration of the docklands.

3.7. Section 166 provides for the dissolution of a Corporation when its purpose has been achieved.

3.8. The Act also provides under Section 179 and Schedule 32 for the establishment of Enterprise Zones which were first announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in presenting his Budget in March 1980. An Enterprise Zone encourages industry and commerce by the relaxation of planning controls and exemptions from rates for commercial or industrial projects. A scheme for an Enterprise Zone may be prepared by, *inter alia*, a London borough council or a UDC. Such a scheme has been prepared for the Isle of Dogs both by Tower Hamlets Borough Council and by the prospective UDC. If a UDC is established for the London docklands, the Secretary of State intends that it will be responsible for the Enterprise Zone.

Differences between the DJC area and the UDA

4.1. The area of land designated in the Order as a UDA is significantly different from the DJC area. The DJC area is that adopted for the 1971 Travers Morgan study and includes parts of five London Boroughs. The UDA does not include those parts of the DJC area lying in the boroughs of Greenwich and Lewisham, and those boroughs were not involved in proceedings before the Committee. Nor, as indicated in paragraph 1.5., does the UDA include a substantial area of land to the east of Beckton in the borough of Newham.

4.2. More important differences between the boundaries of the two areas are that the UDA includes certain areas along the south bank of the Thames between London Bridge and Rotherhithe (the extended area) and, on the north bank, the Royal Mint Site and St. Katharine Docks, none of which was in the DJC area.

4.3. The Committee will deal separately in their Report with the question of boundaries, which were specifically petitioned against by the boroughs and some other Petitioners.

Progress on regeneration and the future needs of the boroughs for housing land

5.1. The Committee have felt it most important to try to establish what has been achieved by the boroughs and the DJC within the area designated as a UDA. A great deal of argument for and against the UDC was directed to whether such a corporation was necessary or desirable in the light of the achievements of the DJC. From the mass of evidence given before the Committee it is not easy to extract absolute facts. However, tables were prepared at the request of the Committee and agreed between the Government and the petitioners giving a factual picture of housing and industry between 1976 and 1981. These tables are

appended to this Report as Tables 1 and 2. The picture that they disclose is that in housing only 1,300 new dwellings have been completed since 1976, with a further 900 under construction. This compares with the LDSP target for 1982 of approximately 6,000 new dwellings. On employment, over 8,500 jobs have been lost in the last five years and less than 800 new jobs created. This compares with the LDSP target of between 10,000 and 12,000 new jobs by 1982.

5.2. A substantial amount of progress has been made since 1976 in areas other than industry and housing. In Southwark, the major undertaking of filling and consolidating the Surrey Docks has been completed and the trunk sewage system for the area has been laid. A new distributor road round the filled docks area has been almost completed. Ninety-seven thousand square feet of factory space have been completed, as the first phase of an Industrial Estate. Considerable amenity provision has also been made including the building of a new sports pavilion, the laying out of playing fields, the planting of a woodland open space on the former Russia Dock and the conversion of the Greenland Dock to recreational use.

5.3. In Newham the Beckton marshes have been drained and two link roads across the former marsh have been built. Open space has been laid out and some community projects completed. The London Industrial Park at Beckton has been established and considerable industrial development has taken place in North Woolwich and Silvertown.

5.4. In Tower Hamlets substantial progress has been made in filling the London Docks. A new sports centre has been built and development has begun on the new Billingsgate Fish Market and a new printing works for News International.

5.5. The Committee were, however, told, and saw for themselves, how much vacant and undeveloped land there still is in docklands. In particular the closing last year of the PLA operations in the West India and Millwall Docks, several years before this was expected, has created an enormous area of idle docks and extra vacant land over and above that which the LDSP envisaged in 1976. The area is very badly in need of regeneration and there is only limited progress being made so far in attracting industry to the docklands. This is not disputed by the boroughs who point, however, to what has already been achieved despite the very great infrastructure problems.

5.6. The Committee accept that the LDSP was drawn up on the basis of a twenty-year programme of which only five have so far passed. But, as the figures in the appended Tables show, the DJC has not achieved the housing or employment targets hoped for in the LDSP. Evidence given by one witness for the Government was that he had refused to take the post of managing director of the Docklands Development Organisation largely because the LDSP targets were over-optimistic. The impression gained from evidence by the Committee confirms this view.

5.7. The Committee heard evidence that in all three boroughs there is a great shortage of money to build public housing. The Housing Investment Programme (HIP) allocation of money has been cut throughout the country. The boroughs acknowledge that in the present financial climate they have sufficient money only to undertake rehabilitation of existing housing stock and have no money to build new houses.

5.8. Although there are some very substantial housing needs in the docklands area, witnesses for the boroughs indicated that housing conditions elsewhere in the boroughs were often far worse. In Tower Hamlets, conditions in Spitalfields are considered worse than in Wapping or Limehouse. The land availability in the docklands is seen, therefore, by the boroughs partly as providing scarce housing land for rehousing tenants from elsewhere in their areas. For instance, in Tower Hamlets, 55 acres of land in the docklands area have been allocated for housing. The borough has only 9 acres of housing land elsewhere. Newham has only 15 acres of housing land available outside docklands, with a further 20 acres expected to become available by 1985. On the other hand, Newham has 175 acres of housing land programmed for development on the drained Beckton marshes. Southwark also are looking to their docklands area for new housing land for rehousing their tenants. Many of their housing estates, including those in the docklands area, while being structurally sound need thinning out in order to give them more light and open space.

Summary of the Government's Case in Support of the Order

6.1. The closure of the docks and the disappearance of dock-related industry, with the consequent loss of jobs and decline in population as people left the area in search of employment elsewhere, created a problem which may fairly be called a national rather than a local one.

6.2. The decline which started in the mid-1960s is still continuing. New industry has not come in to take the place of the old and young people are continuing to leave the area.

6.3. The existing machinery is inadequate to deal with the problem. The DJC prepared the Strategic Plan and has overall development control by which it can ensure that development by the boroughs does not run counter to the plan; but it has no power to acquire or dispose of land or otherwise implement the plan. How it is implemented is in effect decided by each borough separately with regard to its own part of docklands. But each borough is necessarily as much concerned for the parts of its area which lie outside docklands as for the parts which lie inside it and cannot possibly have a single minded concern for the regeneration of "docklands" as a whole.

6.4. The boroughs tend to look too much to the past and too exclusively to the aspirations of the existing population and too little to the possibility of regenerating docklands by the introduction of new types of industry and new types of housing.

6.5. Although the LDSP envisaged that at least 20% of the dwellings in docklands would be privately owned and 30%-40% would be "mixed tenure" the proportion of public, as compared with private, housing in the area remains extremely high. In Tower Hamlets as much 97.6% of dwellings are council dwellings as compared with an average of 56% for London as a whole. As there is now no money available for the building of new publicly rented housing, the land allocated by the boroughs for housing, if it is not used for the construction of privately owned or "mixed tenure" houses will remain unused for the time being.

6.6. The borough councils are necessarily subject to pressure from local organisations which are naturally primarily concerned to secure what they think will benefit their members. In this connection it is significant that when in 1980 the officers of the DJC recommended a revision of the LDSP the Docklands Forum was opposed to any review of it.

6.7. There is no doubt that as things are, no progress towards regeneration can be made without the injection of substantial amounts of money by central government. The money available under the Urban Programme for such uncontroversial projects as dock filling and the provision of amenities was successfully channelled to the boroughs through the DJC. But government money is now needed to "prime the pump" for attracting private investment to docklands, in the shape of new types of industry and private housing. The DJC and the boroughs are unsuitable recipients of money to be employed for these purposes.

6.8. It is only natural that the proposal to set up a UDC should have aroused opposition, not only from the boroughs themselves but from any local organisations. These bodies realise that they will not be able to bring such pressure to bear on a UDC as they can bring to bear on locally elected councillors. But the Chairman designate of the UDC made it clear that he is well aware that if a UDC is to be a success, it must work in harmony with the boroughs and give due consideration to the views of the local population as expressed through the Docklands Forum. Once it is seen that the UDC is operating in this spirit, opposition to it will gradually die away.

Summary of the Petitioners' Case against the Order

7.1. If a UDC is established, the power to control development in docklands will be transferred from the democratically elected borough councils to a body, the members of which are appointed by the Secretary of State. Only a very strong case could justify such a transfer of power and the Government have failed to make out such a case.

7.2. The boroughs co-operating through the DJC are competent to do anything that can in fact be usefully done by any public body towards the regeneration of docklands. Much has already been achieved through the Urban Programme in the way of dock filling and the provision of open spaces and other amenities and, until the cutting down of the HIP allocations, much was achieved in the way of public housing.

7.3. The attraction of new industry to docklands was for a long time hindered by the fact that for many years, as a part of government policy to help the assisted areas in the North of England, South Wales and Scotland, it had been illegal under Section 73 of the London Government Act 1963, to advertise industrial opportunities in London. That prohibition has now been removed and each borough has an efficient industrial officer who is working hard to attract industry into his area. It is common ground that there should be an "Enterprise Zone" in the Isle of Dogs, but that zone can be run by the Tower Hamlets Borough Council—which has made a bid for it—just as well as by a UDC. Their efficiency in this field is illustrated by the recent transfer of the Billingsgate Market to a site in the Isle of Dogs.

7.4. Private house ownership is beyond the reach of all but a tiny minority of the existing inhabitants of docklands and such council tenants as are in fact able to do so can now buy their dwellings. The boroughs have construed—and reasonably construed—the “tenure mix” percentages in the Strategic Plan as applying to the situation envisaged as obtaining at the end of the day—i.e. in 1997—and not as intended to govern the provision of housing in the early stages. At present the need—if only there were money to satisfy it—is for the provision of publicly rented small houses with gardens. Any houses built for private ownership will in fact be bought by people of higher income groups coming in from outside docklands who will form an alien community there.

7.5. The establishment of a UDC will entail much duplication of work with the planning departments of the boroughs and the proposal to set it up has aroused widespread local opposition which is likely to endure. People fear—and reasonably fear—that the UDC will concentrate on the development of the best sites and that when, in years to come, money is once more available for the construction of new publicly rented houses, there will no longer be suitable land available on which to build them.

Conclusions

8.1. Docklands does not form a single homogeneous community. The average man or woman living in the Surrey Docks has a far closer connection with the rest of Southwark than with the Isle of Dogs—let alone Silvertown or Beckton. What links together the very different areas which make up docklands is the fact that they are all suffering from the same calamity—the closure of the docks and the disappearance of dock-related industry. When the Committee toured docklands they were force-fully struck by the extent of that calamity and what a vast task faces anybody seeking to regenerate the area.

8.2. The Committee were very favourably impressed by the high standard of ability displayed by the borough officers who gave evidence before them. They were also impressed by the amount which has in fact been achieved by the DJC and the boroughs despite the unfavourable economic climate. The Beckton marshes have been drained, the Surrey Docks have been filled in and the London Dock in Wapping is in the process of being filled in. Amenities of various kinds have been provided—such as an admirable Sports Centre at Wapping—and something has been done towards replacing “dock-related” industry with other activities—such as the placing of the Billingsgate Market in the Isle of Dogs. But the amount which remains to be done is enormous.

8.3. The Committee have no doubt that the opposition to the proposed transfer of development control from the boroughs to the UDC, voiced by the local organisations which have petitioned against the Order, is perfectly genuine. These bodies were consulted when the LDSP was prepared; they realise that the influence which they can bring to bear on elected councillors is greater than any influence which they are likely to be able to bring to bear on a UDC; and they fear that if a UDC is established, developments of which they disapprove may be carried out without regard to their views. But while the Committee understand—and indeed sympathise with—their attitude, they think that the approach of some of the witnesses to the problem of the regeneration of docklands was somewhat parochial.

8.4. It is clear that despite the efforts of the DJC and the boroughs, new industry is not coming in to take the place of the old and young people are still leaving the area. It is essential that something be done to arrest this decline and the Committee think that nothing will be done unless there is a change of approach—a change of priorities. Private investors will not put money into docklands on any large scale unless they are encouraged by the presence of an environment attractive to them, including the availability of some private housing. Furthermore the evidence which the Committee have heard suggests that low-priced private housing might not be beyond the reach of some young people in docklands and that the present lack of it may be one of the causes of their drifting away from the area. On the other hand, it is to be remembered that council tenants now have the right to buy their homes, and this may contribute to a solution of the problem.

8.5. It is not for the Committee to speculate whether, if there were no UDC, the Government would make available to the DJC and the boroughs the large sums of money which it states that it will make available to the UDC to help it in its task of regeneration. But even if one assumes that such money would be available, the Committee think that, in any case a UDC is more likely to attract private investment into the area than the boroughs and the DJC.

8.6. Several witnesses expressed the fear that various schemes for the provision of amenities would be adversely affected by the establishment of a UDC. The Committee see no ground for such fears. A UDC will be as much concerned with the improvement of the environment as the boroughs and the DJC and will have power to spend money for such purposes. Certain allotment holders in Beckton also expressed fears that their position would be adversely affected by a UDC but the Committee do not share these fears. On the other hand, they have considerable sympathy with the fears expressed by some witnesses that if the UDC were to be successful in attracting much new industry and in getting a large number of private houses built, there might be a shortage of suitable land for public housing when money for the purpose of constructing it becomes once more available. These fears were voiced in particular by witnesses from Newham. The draining of the Beckton marshes has provided a large area of vacant land on parts of which the Borough Council has been looking forward to building public housing in order to relieve the congestion in other parts of the borough. They are naturally dismayed at the prospect that the very success of a UDC might frustrate their hopes. The Chairman designate of the UDC told the Committee that he would return to the boroughs any housing land vested in the UDC on which a council had a development plan which it was in a position to implement. The Committee think, however, that he ought also to look ahead and have in mind the probable future needs of a borough for land for public housing.

8.7. This leads the Committee to a final point. It is obvious—and the Chairman designate fully recognised—that if a UDC is to be a success it is essential that it establishes and maintains good relations with the local authorities and their officers and avails itself of their advice and expertise. The Code of consultation, provided for under section 140 of the Act, should ensure that this is so. The UDC must also win the confidence of local organisations. It must always let the Docklands Forum know what it is thinking of doing, so that they can express their views on any proposal and it must make it clear that such views, even if not accepted, are always seriously considered.

8.8. The Committee are very conscious that to transfer development control over so wide an area from democratically elected councils to a body appointed by the Secretary of State is a step which is not easily to be justified, especially in an area such as docklands where the attachment to local democracy was shown to be so strong; but for the reasons which they have given, the Committee think that the Government have made out their case. Accordingly the Committee recommend that the principle of a UDA and UDC for the London docklands should be accepted.

Boundaries

9.1. The Committee now turn to consider whether any areas should be excluded from the proposed UDA. The Order laid before the House is not open to amendment. However, the House could proceed in one of two ways to implement any changes the Committee recommend. It could refuse to affirm the Order and ask the Secretary of State to lay an amended Order, incorporating any changes proposed. Alternatively, it could affirm the present Order after having exacted an undertaking from the Secretary of State that he would, as soon as possible, lay an amending Order to exclude areas which the present Order includes. The Committee understand that, in either case, the new Order would be hybrid and could be petitioned against. They are advised, however, that any such petitions laid against a new Order might well not be referred to a Select Committee on the ground that a sufficient enquiry had already been held. (See Private Business Standing Order 216). This, however, would be a matter for the Hybrid Instruments Committee and the House.

9.2. There are four areas in particular which the Petitioners—or some of them—argued should be excluded: (1) St. Katharine Docks, (2) The Royal Mint Site, (3) A strip of land running along the south bank of the Thames from London Bridge to Rotherhithe bounded on the south by Tooley Street and Jamaica Road called in these proceedings “the extended area”, and (4) an area in the former Surrey Docks called the Lysander Site. (1), (2) and (3) lie outside the DJC area but (4) lies within it.

9.3. *St. Katharine Docks.* These docks closed in 1969. The reason why they were excluded from the Travers Morgan study and consequently from the DJC area was presumably because they had been sold by the PLA to the GLC in 1971 and had been already leased by the GLC to developers. The docks are a comparatively small area—some 30 acres, 12 of which are still undeveloped—and are used for a variety of purposes as a marina, a hotel, block of residential flats and public houses. They are frequently crowded with tourists. In these circumstances, it is not surprising that proposals by the developers frequently meet with opposition and that the Tower Hamlets Borough Council as planning authority is kept busy. They argued that as the site is already largely developed they should be left in charge. The Committee consider, however, that since this area is an integral part of docklands, it should form part of the UDA.

9.4. *The Royal Mint Site.* The Royal Mint left this site in 1969. It is owned by the Crown Estate Commissioners. The Government contemplated building offices for civil servants on it and it is only recently that it has been decided to dispose of it to private developers. The Tower Hamlets Borough Council (which is not in any way responsible for the delays in development) prepared a planning brief for this site in October 1980. As well as providing for the preservation of the 18th century building at the front of the site, this also stipulates that the development should include an underground coach park and 100 small flats.

9.5. The Royal Mint site—though near St. Katharine Docks—is not part of docklands at all and the only reason advanced by the Government for its inclusion in the UDA is that the stipulation with regard to the coach park and flats may be unacceptable to developers and that the Tower Hamlets Borough Council is likely to be generally “sticky” on development. Even if this be true—and the Committee were in fact told that a number of developers were showing interest in the site—it would, in the Committee’s view, afford no justification for including in the UDA a site which is not part of docklands at all. The Committee, therefore recommend that the Royal Mint site be excluded from the UDA.

9.6. *The Extended Area.* This area does not include any enclosed docks but the waterfront consists largely of wharves and warehouses and the area can, in the Committee’s view, be fairly considered as part of docklands. There are five main sites on the waterfront—Hay’s Wharf, Courage’s Brewery, Butler’s Wharf, Chamber’s Wharf and Platform Wharf. Courage’s Brewery, has only recently ceased to use its site but the other sites have been underused for many years. The owners of Hay’s Wharf and Chamber’s Wharf (who are the same people) have reached agreement with the Southwark Borough Council on the development of these sites—but the proposed development of Hay’s Wharf is opposed by local organisations and residents on the ground that it provides for too much office space and too little space for industry or housing. Planning applications on this matter have been called-in by the Secretary of State for his own determination. The officers of the Borough Council (who were excellent witnesses) submitted that there were no grounds for transferring development control at Hay’s Wharf and Chamber’s Wharf from the Council to the UDC at this stage. They also submitted that the Council would be well able to secure the development of the Courage’s Brewery site and that, as much of the land lying between the wharves and warehouses on the waterfront and Jamaica Road was covered with blocks of council flats, it would be undesirable that this land be brought under the jurisdiction of the UDC. On the otherhand, they admitted that the Borough Council was faced with difficulties with regard to Butler’s Wharf and Platform Wharf. The major difficulty in the way of the development of Butler’s Wharf is caused by a conservation order in respect of a warehouse on the waterfront, the existence of which makes development very expensive. The greater part of Platform Wharf is owned by the Borough Council and is destined by it for housing but the Council has at present no money available to build new housing. Moreover, any development of this site is rendered difficult by the presence on it of a small wharf—Albion Wharf—which the council tried unsuccessfully to purchase compulsorily.

9.7. The Government argued that Hay’s Wharf and Chamber’s Wharf should be included in the UDA because although the Southwark Borough Council as at present constituted, was willing to agree to a sensible development of the sites, the composition of the Council might change before any such development was completed. This appears to the Committee to be a somewhat suspect argument and were it not for Butler’s Wharf and Platform Wharf the Committee would have hesitated to recommend the inclusion of the “extended area” in the UDA. There are, however, good grounds for thinking that a UDC could do more to hasten the development of those sites than the Borough Council can do and the Committee think that it would be undesirable to include the UDA two isolated sites separated from the rest of it.

9.8. Accordingly, the Committee recommend that the “extended area” as a whole be included. The Committee would, however, stress that as the officers of the Borough Council are acquainted with all the details of the proposed development of Hay’s Wharf and Chamber’s Wharf the UDC should let them continue to supervise its progress.

9.9. *The Lysander Site.* The LDSP envisaged that the Surrey Docks when filled should be occupied by a Trade Mart. That project was eventually abandoned in 1979 owing to lack of financial backing. Eventually, in January 1981, the Southwark Borough Council entered into an agreement with developers for the construction on a site of 120 acres—known as the Lysander Site—of a shopping centre, and industrial park, exhibition and conference halls, a hotel, a marina, parkland and 350 dwellings—250 to be for sale and 100 to be in “shared ownership”. Outline planning permission has been granted and it is hoped that development will start in January 1982. The Borough Council would like this site to be excluded from the UDA but the Government submitted that although there will be no need for the UDC to concern itself with the site if the proposed development goes through, the UDC would be better able to secure some alternative development if for any reason the present scheme broke down. If the Lysander Site were not inside the UDA, the Committee would hesitate to accede to this argument but they think that it would be undesirable to leave an island in the UDA under the development control of the Borough Council.

9.10. Accordingly the Committee recommend that the Lysander Site be included in the UDA, though what they have said in connection with Hay’s Wharf and Chamber’s Wharf as to the desirability of the UDC leaving the Borough officers to continue working on the development, applies equally to the Lysander Site.

Procedural Matters

10.1. The Committee do not feel that they can conclude this Report without referring to the procedure which they have followed in considering the Order and the Petitions against it. They sat for 50 days spread over a period from 10th February to 5th June. While all members of the Committee accepted the duty placed on them in considering the Order, they do not consider that it is a duty which could again be expected of members of the House. The enquiry which they conducted was in the nature of a public enquiry which would normally be held in different circumstances and under different arrangements. The Committee doubt whether the procedure which they followed, which is that on an opposed Private Bill, is suitable for this sort of issue. Moreover, if there are further Committees of this duration, there will be implications for the staffing of the House, which is not geared to enquiries of such length.

10.2. The Committee would not wish to suggest the abolition of a procedure which in certain circumstances can provide a safeguard for injured parties but they would recommend that the Select Committee on Procedure of the House should examine the implications of the procedure for the future.

Summary of Recommendations

11. The Committee recommend:—

1. That the principle of a UDA and UDC should be accepted for the London Docklands.
2. That the Royal Mint site should be excluded from the UDA.
3. That the Select Committee on Procedure of the House should consider the procedure on hybrid orders, in the light of proceedings on this Order.

TABLE 1

THE LONDON DOCKLANDS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (AREA AND CONSTITUTION) ORDER 1980
 HOUSES IN DOCKLAND (position as at April 1981)

This schedule has been agreed between the Department of the Environment and the three Borough Councils.

Agency	New dwellings					Rehabilitation	
	Completed since 1976	Under construction	Infrastructure completed	Former dock sites prepared	Site preparation in progress	Complete	In progress
Borough Council	512	641	714	336	675	79	76
Greater London Council	628	—	—	—	—	—	—
Housing Association	167	185	236	—	—	381	297
Private	2	60	360	—	—	—	31
TOTAL	1309	886	1310	336	675	460	404

Columns 1 and 2 : The new dwelling figures include the conversion of former warehouses to residential use.

Column 3 : "Infrastructure completed" means that main sewers, gas mains and electricity mains have been laid at least to the extent necessary for a house building contract to start, and any necessary access roads have also been provided.

Column 4 : "Sites prepared" means that docks have been filled and consolidated, and that infrastructure works have been carried out to the point where a house building contract could start.

Column 5 : The Tower Hamlets LBC site preparation contract in Wapping is expected to result in prepared sites as follows :
 September/October 1981, Western Dock (417) in December 1982/January 1983 and Hermitage Wall (165) in May/June 1983.

TABLE 2
London Docklands Development Corporation
(AREA AND CONSTITUTION) ORDER 1980
EMPLOYMENT IN DOCKLANDS

This schedule has been agreed between the Department of the Environment and the three Borough Councils.

Table A: Known closures of firms employing 10 or more people to April 1981, since June 1976 with jobs in those firms at June 1976.

	<i>Number of firms</i>	<i>Number of jobs</i>
Newham:		
dock-related	2	474
other	9	1,727
Total	<u>11</u>	<u>2,201</u>
Southwark:		
dock-related	0	0
other	3	121
Total	<u>3</u>	<u>121</u>
Tower Hamlets		
dock-related	4	814
other	8	398
Total	<u>12</u>	<u>1,212</u>
<hr/>		
Total:		
dock-related	6	1,288
other	20	2,246
Total	<u>26</u>	<u>3,534</u>

Notes to Table A

1. The figures do not include construction industry jobs on building sites.
2. Dock-related firms are those firms such as ship-repairers and shipping companies whose business depended upon the activity of the Port of London; the dock-related job losses comprise mainly firms in the ship-repair and marine engineering industries.
3. In general it is not possible to identify reliable figures for firms which have remained in Docklands throughout the period, but where employment levels have reduced.
4. In 1976 there were 3,100 people employed in the operation of the India and Millwall Docks and 4,400 employed in the Royal Group, a total of 7,500. In March 1981 only 2,430 of these jobs remained, (all in the Royal Group), a fall of 5,070 jobs. These are *in addition* to the dock-related and other job-losses given in Table A.