

News Release

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LDDC AND SOUTHWARK COUNCIL SIGN AGREEMENT ON SURREY DOCKS



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The London Docklands Development Corporation's (LDDC) task in Surrey Docks is completed today (20 December 1996) following the signing of an agreement between the LDDC and the London Borough of Southwark (LBS).

The Council and the Corporation have agreed the transfer of more than 100 acres of LDDC owned land and other responsibilities to the Council in return for the transfer of LDDC property assets.

The LDDC and LBS have drawn up a Statement of Agreed Intentions aimed at sustaining and continuing the regeneration of the area. The agreement includes the following key points:-

- * The Council will take over and maintain the LDDC's dock estate and public open spaces which include Canada Water, Albion Channel, Surrey Water, the Stave Hill Ecology Park, Greenland Dock and South Dock. Southwark Council will also take over public highways still in LDDC ownership and the LDDC's freehold of sites leased for private residential development although efforts will be made to transfer these to the lessees or management companies.
- * The continuing costs of maintenance of the dock estate and public areas will be offset through the transfer of the Surrey Quays Shopping Centre, Docklands Enterprise Centre, the Surrey Docks Farm and the annual revenue the Corporation receives from the Lavender Green housing estate. The LDDC has also passed on 8.32 acres of development land adjoining the new Canada Water Station under construction for the Jubilee Line.

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- * The transfer of lands is to be phased over the next six months. The Corporation will continue to maintain the dock estate and public areas until 1997. During this period the Council will establish new maintenance contracts in consultation with local residents.
- * The LDDC will carry out work to improve the estate and reduce the costs of maintenance including repairs to the dock and river walls, replacement lighting, dock edge painting, bridge repair and the refurbishment of footpaths and landscaping.

Southwark Council has confirmed they will continue to make the Surrey Docks Watersports Centre available to the general public for water based sports and leisure activities.

Two local junction improvement schemes to enhance access to Surrey Docks Peninsula and assist in its ongoing regeneration will be carried out. The LDDC will fund the work at Hawkstone Road/Lower Road junction which will be completed by the end of 1997. The Surrey Quays Road/Lower Road junction is to be funded by Southwark Council. The scheme is subject to relocation of the Seven Islands Leisure Centre and will be carried out later.

LDDC Chief Executive, Eric Sorensen, comments: "The LDDC has much to be proud of in Surrey Docks. In 1981 the infilled dock space we inherited showed little promise of things to come. Employment was sparse and housing was run down. Today, the Surrey Docks Peninsula is a well balanced suburban community of over 16,000 people, well served by schools and health centres. It has some of London's most attractive housing, and contains one of the Capital's largest areas of green space. When the Jubilee Line Station opens in 15 months time the major employment centres of the city, the West End and Canary Wharf will be only minutes away. The future of the area is very bright."

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The Leader of the London Borough of Southwark, Cllr Jeremy Fraser said, "In the early years of the London Docklands Development Corporation, there was some friction between Southwark and the LDDC. I am very glad that now we have managed to build effective working relationships and we look forward in continuing the changes that have come to the Surrey Docks area."

Achievements in the Surrey Docks Peninsula

In 1981 when the LDDC was set up, the Surrey Docks Peninsula, covering 460 acres was in need of a drastic solution to the problem of what to do with redundant dock space. The area was isolated from central London, housing was in poor condition and since the closure of the Surrey Docks in 1969 there had been little in the way of job creation. Basic social, community and shopping facilities were available locally but to a modest standard.

The physical and economic regeneration of the Peninsula is now well advanced. The population has risen from just under 6,000 in 1981 to an estimated 16,000 today.

Housing has seen a major transformation in numbers, quality and types of tenure. More than 5,500 new homes have been built, 4,000 of which have been provided by the LDDC. Owner occupation has risen from 3% (1981) to 39% in the early 1990's. The Corporation has also invested over £10.5m to assist the Council in the refurbishment of over 1,500 council dwellings.

Over 840,000 sq ft of commercial and industrial floorspace has been completed, of which the Surrey Quays Shopping Centre comprised 280,000 sq ft which serves as a focus for nearby communities and shoppers over a wide area of South London.

Following the Corporation's investment of £550,000 the South Dock now houses London's largest working marina, with berths for over 200 vessels.

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The Greenland Dock also benefited from cash investment via £1.19 million grant from the LDDC and is now the site of Surrey Docks Watersports Centre. A number of other leisure and recreational schemes have received financial support from the Corporation, including Seven Islands Leisure Centre, Surrey Docks Stadium and Surrey Docks Farm.

The Corporation attaches great importance to encouraging training and supporting education initiatives in the Surrey Docks. The largest single award made by the LDDC was £3.5 million towards Bacon's College, the first new build City Technology College. The Corporation has also made money available to younger age groups including £500,000 to Alfred Salter Primary School, £277,000 to Redriff Primary School and £256,000 to St John's RC Primary School. In addition, grants totalling £926,000 have gone towards the establishment of computer, business and construction training centres.

In line with the LDDC's plan to have a new or refurbished health centre for all Docklanders by 1998, the Corporation has paid a quarter of the £600,000 spent to build a new extension to Albion Health Centre, which opened this year. This followed an earlier LDDC grant of £117,000, to improve Surrey Docks Health Centre.

The LDDC has made a substantial contribution to improving the ecology of Surrey Docks. A strong and distinctive landscape structure now exists in the area thanks to projects like Lavender Pond, the first ecology park in London Docklands, Russia Dock Woodland, the Urban Butterfly Sanctuary and Pearson Park. As a reflection of the LDDC's creative approach to environmental design the Surrey Quays landscaping strategy and Greenland Dock both won major urban design awards in 1989.

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The De-designation Process

An order has been laid before Parliament by the Secretary of State for the Environment to exclude Surrey Docks Peninsula from the LDDC's boundaries from 20 December 1996 (Section 179 of the Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act 1993). The LDDC's development control powers in the Surrey Docks Peninsula will consequently transfer to the London Borough of Southwark.

The LDDC will have eight weeks to complete determination of planning applications it receives on or before 19 December 1996. Any outstanding applications at that date will transfer to Southwark Council. From 20 December 1996 all new planning applications should be submitted to Southwark.

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