

File

18 April 1985

LORD YOUNG

c Mr Turnbull

AN EXHIBITION HALL AND SPORTS CENTRE IN DOCKLANDS

I held a meeting today with Christopher Benson, the Chairman and Reg Ward, the Chief Executive, of London Docklands.

They have discussed the Eurodome Stadium project with Lord Bruce. International Sports Marketing Inc have also put plans to them for an international covered stadium, exhibition, business and conference centre called "Londondome". And they have had suggestions from people involved in the Garden Festivals for an Expo-type exhibition in London, or a national product and service exhibition.

They believe that:

1. It is possible to build an exhibition/sports centre in London Docklands - even without the lure of the 1992 Olympics.
2. The capital for this project can come from private sources.
3. A National Exhibition could be mounted by 1988 (perhaps earlier).



4. They would like some modest, early-year revenue funding - either from their own budget or out of the Urban Programme budget, which they have frequently raided in the past.

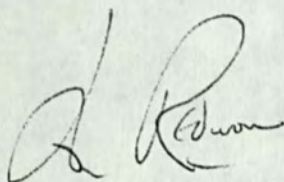
I suggested to them that they should enter negotiations with Lord Bruce, and with International Sports Marketing fairly quickly, to see which of the two projects is the better, and whether the competitors could in due course be brought together in a combined effort. There is only room for one exhibition or sports centre in East London.

They also agreed that if a National Exhibition Centre was going to work in Docklands, it would be sensible to bring Jeffrey Sterling into the negotiations at an early stage, so that an alternative use could be discussed for Earls Court. Jeffrey may want some stake in the activity - including the catering activity - of any new Exhibition Centre, as they currently have business interests in Earls Court. Setting up a National Exhibition Centre in Docklands would be seen as a rival to the Birmingham Centre: that could be mitigated if it is a replacement for Earls Court.

I suggested that the LDDC should move quickly to the next stage. They should set the terms for judging between the rival applicants for an exhibition and sports centre, and



then negotiate with all the interested parties to try and proceed by agreement. Any help from government that you felt able to offer would, I am sure, be appreciated, even if it is only by way of enthusiastic but unpaid support.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'J Redwood', written in dark ink.

JOHN REDWOOD