

Councils' speed-dating alternative to MIPIM

10 February 2012 | By [Sarah Townsend](#)

<http://www.propertyweek.com/professional/public-sector/councils%E2%80%99-speed-dating-alternative-to-mipim/5031715.article?sm=5031715>



Event at City Hall event aims to find developers for stalled schemes. Sarah Townsend reports

Just as hordes of property professionals head to the south of France for their annual networking session at MIPIM, others will gather at London's City Hall for another useful — though slightly less glamorous — event.

On 1 March, developers will meet representatives from at least 25 London councils to discuss sites across the capital in which they are interested in investing.

The speed dating-style initiative is called Sitematch London and has been devised by Ealing Council, the Greater London Authority (GLA) and events company 3Fox International, to help to progress stalled development schemes across the capital.

The councils taking part in the initiative have posted details of their top five priority sites on a specially created website. Developers have been invited to use the website to book 15-minute meetings with representatives from a maximum of five councils to discuss how they can bring particular schemes to fruition.

At least 100 sites have been listed, including Ealing's 4.5 acre Arcadia shopping centre, the 8.9 acre Mount Pleasant site in Islington, Merton's 11.4 acre Mitcham Gas Works redevelopment, and Hounslow's Kew Bridge scheme.

Most of the projects have yet to receive planning permission, while proposals for others are at such an early stage that uses have yet to be decided.

Meanwhile, several sites have been put forward by the London Thames Gateway Development Corporation, which is being wound up in 2013.

These include the 60 acre Barking Riverside residential development and the Sustainable Industries Park in Dagenham, both of which are among the corporation assets being transferred to the GLA in April.

Brendon Walsh, Ealing Council's director of property and regeneration, says the idea behind Sitematch London was to create a "stripped-down version of what works well at MIPIM: plenty of meetings — but without the boats and glitz".

"Local authorities have come under fire in recent years for spending money going to MIPIM," says Walsh. "We wanted to hold an alternative event here that has a similar 'property marketplace' feel to it — somewhere councils can network, while also meeting interested developers."

Property services firms, including BNP Paribas Real Estate, Capita Symonds, EC Harris, GVA and Willmott Dixon are sponsoring the event, principally by helping the councils put information on stalled schemes onto the Sitematch London website and marketing the initiative to developers. Data centre developer Reduire DC is the main sponsor. The event will be opened by deputy mayor for planning Edward Lister.

For more information go to sitematchlondon.com