

Save Little London Campaign News

A coalition of council tenants, residents and supporters fighting Leeds City Council's plans to sell off and demolish 435 council homes under the Private Finance Initiative (PFI)

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Tenants' Association shouts 'foul play', calls in Watchdog



The committee of the Little London Tenants and Residents Association (LLTRA) has demanded an investigation into the handling of the consultation process used by Leeds City Council to justify the imposition of PFI in Little London.

'We've tried to work with the council, but they've been determined to ignore or mislead us, along with the rest of the community,' said Vice Chair Andrew Coley. 'They've left us no other option than take our complaint to the Ombudsman, who has agreed to investigate the actions of the Council.'

The detailed complaint by LLTRA catalogues numerous incidents of foul play in the conduct of the Council. It claims the Council already knew what option it wanted to pursue before the consultation began and mispent taxpayers money in its attempt to mislead tenants about what the PFI proposal would really mean for Little London.

'We want the consultation scrapped and the PFI proposals dumped, before they rip the heart out of Little London,' continued Andrew Coley. 'Only then can *all* the community benefit from the regeneration of our neighbourhood.'

What is the Local Government Ombudsman?



Anne Seex, the Local Ombudsman

The Local Government Ombudsman is an independent watchdog with the power to overturn decisions of local councils if it finds they have treated citizens unjustly.

STOP PRESS: LEGAL CHALLENGE TO PFI

As we went to press we learned that a Little London tenant has just issued proceedings in the High Court to challenge the legality of Leeds City Council's decision to adopt the PFI scheme. Watch this space...

Little London meeting launches 'city-wide' privatisation campaign

A packed meeting at Space@ in Little London last month saw the launch of a city wide campaign against privatisation in Leeds.

The Save Little London Campaign's high profile attracted council tenants, trade unionists and campaigners from across the city. All expressed their support for the Little London campaign, as well as highlighting the effects of privatisation schemes elsewhere.

Ron Graham, ex-councillor and Swarcliffe resident, gave the meeting a taste of the true nature of PFI housing schemes. His estate fell under a PFI scheme seven years ago, but tenants have little to show for the promised £millions so far.

Ron explained how it took six years just to sign a contract, during which time demolitions greatly reduced the housing stock and ensured those opposed to the PFI were not around when the vote took place.

Campaign contact details: ring Steve on 217-8608

Email us: savelittlelondon@gmail.com, Check out the website: www.savelittlelondon.org.uk

'Since work began last year, only 70 council homes out of 1600 to be refurbished have been started – not a single one has been finished,' he told the meeting. 'At this rate, refurbishment will not be completed until 2037.'

Ron showed pictures of the appalling workmanship notorious with PFI schemes that cut costs and make profit at every corner.



Swarcliffe: PFI contractors replaced existing bath with one that doesn't fit

Celia Foot, a local teacher and education campaigner, drew attention to the effects of privatisation in the school sector, focusing upon the experience of the new city academies and PFI.

Trade unionists John McDermott of Unison and Ray Jones of Amicus stressed the need for a united campaign and pledged support for a major city wide meeting on housing to be held in October – a further opportunity to move Little London up the political agenda.

The meeting was marked above all by positive energy and a willingness to fight back. This was reflected in the last section of the meeting where those present contributed ideas for taking the campaign forward.

Little London may be bearing the brunt of the council's privatisation agenda, but we can take heart from the many people behind us, facing similar threats, who are eager to stand up and say "No!" to a Council determined to put developers' profits before the interests of ordinary people.

Public meeting details

CANCELLED

'Decent homes for all'

Invited speakers:

Austin Mitchell MP

John Allott, Amicus

When? 6 October, 7-9pm

Where? Civic Hall

Campaigning ideas from July's meeting

1. Buy a few shares in PFI companies to find out financial information and attend shareholder meetings
2. Send 100s of emails and letters to the Council, govt, press
3. Pursue our rights as council tenants – seek housing advice
4. Create fighting funds for legal action and campaigning
5. Contact national newspapers, TV stations, filmmakers
6. Get trade unions involved more; ask for funds with affiliation letter
7. Join up with other anti-privatisation campaigns in Health, Education, Local Government, and other public services
8. Big public demonstration in Leeds against privatisation, and for decent public services for ALL
9. Get community back in control of Area Management Committees and Councillors
10. Campaign for social housing and join the Right to Rent Campaign by Leeds Tenants Federation

ALMO Alert

You might have received a letter through the door about 'ALMO reorganisation' giving you a choice between moving from the current 6 ALMOs to 1 or 3. The Council claims it is to make housing management more efficient, but we think it's more about saving money by cutting jobs. There are pros and cons of both options – come to the next Save Little London meeting for some advice.

Come along to our regular meetings!

Next meeting, 4 September

We normally meet at 7pm, every first and third Monday of the month in The Rifleman Pub

Membership form: I wish to become a member of the Save Little London Campaign

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel: _____

Email: _____

Postcode: _____

Date: _____

Please return completed forms to: Save Little London Campaign, c/o 96 Lovell Park Towers, LS7 1DR