

Save Little London News

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



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'Save our Homes' EMERGENCY Public meeting

6.15pm
20 December
Space@
behind Little London
Primary School

- Hear how the council is lying to us about what will happen
- It doesn't just affect the Carltons and Lovells - everyone could suffer!
- Hear how we can save our homes and stop the PFI
- Get advice on getting the best compensation deal
- Have your say on what we should do
- Free tea / coffee

PFI gets green light - estate on red alert to save our homes

So it's finally happened.

After nearly 6 years of delays, dishonesty and downright deception, this week the government ignored our opposition to the PFI and approved the Council's plan to 'regenerate' Little London.

The decision was made after a legal challenge by a tenant to the 'Comprehensive Regeneration' scheme in Little London was rejected by the courts last week. The tenant lives in one of the Lovell flats and will lose her home under the council's plans.

What clinched it, however, was the council's promise to the government that it would foot the bill as the cost of the PFI scheme continues to

spiral out of control.

That's right, Little Londoners, YOU will pay for the demolition of your home, the fat cat salaries of consultants, accountants and lawyers, the profits for the banks, developers and architects who will now feast on our community like vultures.

It's not just the people in the Carltons and Lovells who will be affected. Those of us who get to stay and have our council homes refurbished will also be in for a shock - see our Swarcliffe story inside.

Leaked documents in our possession reveal that the council has agreed to

sell more land and reduce the promised im-



The Lovells will be sold off to developers to turn into 'unaffordable' housing for working class people

provements if the cost of the regeneration increases again.

Save Little London refuses to accept defeat. We won't allow the council to demolish and sell off public housing - our homes - just so that corporations can profit.

The estate is now on a 'red alert' - we have to

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What PFI will mean for Little London

DEMOLITIONS

Carlton Towers, Carlton Carr and Garth will be bulldozed

Community centre and shops to be flattened

All to clear land for private developers to build new housing that we won't be able to afford

EVICCTIONS

Tenants and leaseholders living in Carlton Carr, Garth, Towers and the Lovells will be forced to leave their homes and community

All to allow wealthier city workers to move in and yuppify the area

A LIVING NIGHTMARE

Builders trampling through people's homes for months, baths that don't fit, kitchens left unusable, floorboards through ceilings, roofs not properly sealed, dust and dirt everywhere

Just ask Swarcliffe!

How the council has lied to us all

Porky pie 1: 'We'll honour the vote'

Back in 2001, Leeds City Council promised to respect the vote on PFI. However, when we voted 'no' to PFI the council suddenly had a bout of amnesia and refused to accept the result. So it held another vote, this time cutting out some of the 'no' voting streets from the PFI.

Porky pie 2: 'We won't demolish Carlton Towers'

One of the council's promises that swung the second vote was that Carlton Towers would be saved from demolition. Now the council wants to

flatten them again.

Porky pie 3: 'The PFI will benefit all of the community'



Tory councilor, Les Carter, has consistently told us porky pies, as well as eating them all

How will the regeneration benefit the 300-400 homes that will be evicted from their own community?

The truth is this scheme is an attack on working class people. The council has said publicly that it wants to 'change the mix of people' living here -

that's social engineering.

Porky pie 4: 'PFI isn't privatisation'

PFI involves selling off public services and assets to private companies. It is privatisation.

Porky pie 5: 'PFI is the only game in town'

A lie. The council chose to use PFI—it did not have to.

Porky pie 6: 'The estate will be constantly maintained and invested in for 30 years'

Untrue. Now we learn it's only 20 years - that's 10 years less investment than we were promised.

The Swarcliffe PFI disaster coming to our estate

Back in 1999, the council made exactly the same kind of promises to the people of Swarcliffe. Here's what has actually happened:

Massive delays: 3 year wait for work to begin caused by contract wrangling

New private homes built first... PFI companies only motive is profit – so up went the new private housing for the wealthy arrivals.

...after 18 months, not a single council home finished: there are 1600 houses to renovate on the estate. At this rate, it will take them 31 ½ years to finish all the refurbishments – that's 2037.

Appalling standards: the council has fined the contractor for shocking work, including:

- Walls and ceilings smashed in
- Cracked walls and chronic damp ignored
- Baths and doors that don't fit
- Bathrooms and kitchen left in chaos for months



Insulting compensation: after your home has been destroyed, you will get just £110 of B&Q vouchers to redecorate your whole house. You can't even get this money in cash to pay someone to help you. What good is this to a pensioner, a pregnant woman, a disabled person?



Parking privatisation

Half the garages have been knocked down in one area, while the rents have increased for those remaining. Cars are forced to park on the streets, increasing insurance rates.

Advice for tenants / residents in Carlton Towers, Gate and Carr, and the Lovells

Under the PFI or 'Comprehensive Regeneration', the council plans to demolish Carlton Towers, and Gate and Carr maisonettes; and sell off the Lovell flats to a private developer.

Regardless of whether you are a tenant or an owner-occupier, everyone will be forced to leave the area unless the PFI is stopped.

Know Your Rights

1. The most important thing to do is: **NOTHING. DO NOT MOVE.** Don't agree to move, don't negotiate with the council. Take legal advice before agreeing to anything. The longer you hold out, the more compensation you will get.

2. The council is legally required to help you find alternative accommodation. If you choose to permanently leave Little London for another council home, you will be given "priority extra" rating under the Choice Based Lettings.

3. Compensation for tenants

If you have lived in your current council home for more than 12 months and have no rent arrears you will receive a one off Homes Loss Compensation payment of £3800. This will only be paid when you leave your current home and move to a permanent or temporary new home. A 'proportional payment' will be made if you have lived in your home for less than 12 months.

4. Compensation for lease-holders

As you will be forced to sell your home to the council, you will be entitled to Homes Loss Compensation set at 10% of the agreed market value of your home. That means you will get the market price of your home plus 10% on top. The council will try to push you into selling as soon as possible. Don't listen to them – you have rights and can hold out for the best price possible.

5. Discretionary Allowance

Anyone who moves out must be paid removal & disconnection costs, redirecting post, help in packing for elderly etc.

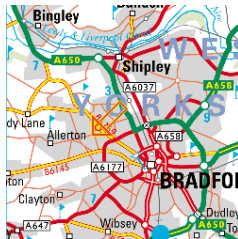
Where the hell will we all go?

Good question. We don't know. In fact, neither does Leeds City Council.

According to someone very high up in housing regeneration, "the council hasn't got a clue where it's going to put people from Little London—it never thought about it".

One major worry for all of us is that Leeds is busy selling off and knocking down all its council hous-

ing. So giving us 'priority extra' means nothing if there are no homes to move in to.



There are currently 31,000 other people waiting on the housing register. The reduction of council housing in

Leeds means that 50 people on average bid for every council house available; in some of the more popular areas that number can rise to 500!!!

We believe that the council intends to move us not just out of Little London but out of Leeds altogether.

See you all in Bradford!

Who will profit from our loss?

As we face losing our homes, £215m of our money will be spent making some people very rich.

Accountants

KPMG has a lucrative contract with Leeds City Council to audit PFI projects



The Banks



Halifax Bank of Scotland technically now owns the Swarcliffe estate

Consultants



The council paid Banks of the Wear to be our 'Independent Tenants Advisor'. Independent?

Surveyors

Gleeds were paid to jointly develop the PFI scheme for Little London.



Not to mention the developers, lawyers, building corporations, architects, management firms, creditors, debt managers etc etc

The Rumour Mill

- The council is emptying Lovell and Carlton Towers, Carlton Garth and Carr - each time a tenant moves on, their home is being shut up. There are mice infestations growing in the Lovells
- Carlton Barracks and Blenheim School could be sold off and demolished to make way for more student flats
- It's being said that a new community centre is no longer in the PFI plans

SAVE LITTLE LONDON MEETING

6PM, TUESDAY 5TH DECEMBER

THE RIFLEMAN PUB,
LITTLE LONDON

Come and join us for a drink and a chat about how we can take the campaign forward.

What on earth is 'PFI' and why do we oppose it?

The Private Finance Initiative is a really bad way of paying for public services. Instead of government or council using our taxes or borrowing money to build and run new schools, hospitals, or council homes, a private consortium of banks, developers, accountants and firms does so instead...for up to 35 years!

The problem is that not only do these companies make huge profits, it also costs them far more to borrow than a government or council. These profits and extra costs are then paid for by us through government subsidies. PFI thus transfers wealth from poor tenants to rich shareholders!

The fraud doesn't stop there. Because PFI schemes are so expensive (about 30% more than normal) government won't give local councils all the money they need to pay the private company. So councils are often forced to sell off land or property to raise the money themselves - this is exactly what's happening in Little London.

The Carltons are being demolished to clear a huge development site for a private developer to come in and build private homes that it will sell on for a huge profit. The Lovells are being sold off to raise money that will then be paid to the private company running Little London estate for 20 years!

As costs rise, the council must keep finding the money from somewhere—more land sales, more public service cuts.

How can we stop this PFI madness?

Legal challenge

There are strong grounds for taking the council to court for its misleading consultation and its disregard for people's basic human rights.

If you are interested in taking Leeds City Council to court, get in touch.

Lobby the government, your councillors and MP

Send 100s of emails and letters to your so-called elected representatives demanding they investigate what is going on.

Make an appointment with Hilary Benn MP to explain why the PFI is wrong for the community.

Write to the media

The British press loves a scandal, especially involving politicians and corrupt local councils. Hostile media coverage often forces decision-makers to change their minds. Write letters to the local and national press, ring radio phone-ins, invite journalists to investigate Leeds City Council's behaviour.

Get campaigning

Join the Save Little London Campaign. We can achieve far more working with each other than we can by ourselves. Our regular meetings are a source of solidarity and support. Over the next few months, we plan to hold public meetings with other tenants' groups, lobbies, demonstrations, community events and film nights

as part of a high-profile campaign. Joining the Save Little London Campaign is FREE

Link up with others

Hook up with other anti-privatisation campaigns in Health, Education, Local Government, and other public services.

Get involved in the new grassroots City Wide Defend Public Housing Network.

Do your homework

Start investigating the companies that might takeover the estate, look at their record on standards, employment, their profits etc.

KEEP FIGHTING