

Councillor Elizabeth Minkin

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15th February 2008

Mrs Ann Wilson
Chair of Governors
Abbey Grange School
Butcher Hill
Leeds LS16 5EA

Dear Mrs Wilson,

POWERLEAGUE

Only Councillor John Illingworth was able to attend the meeting convened last Monday 4th February at very short notice at Abbey Grange School for the briefing on Abbey Grange School's proposals to contract with PowerLeague to build on Butcher Hill fields. We have written to local residents about the proposals, and enclose a copy of our letter for your information.

Our view is that the proposals are truly dreadful and we request that the School withdraws from contracting with Powerleague. We regret that there was no opportunity to discuss your plans before now, and would wish to join in constructive discussions about how sports provision for your pupils might be improved.

Our reasons for opposition so far can be summarised as follows:

The site is designated N1 green space and N8 urban green corridor in the adopted Review UDP and must be preserved as such.

The adverse environmental impact of converting such a large area to hard surface and of greatly increased lighting.

The erection of fencing to prevent public access thereby reducing the amount of open space available to Leeds people.

The building of a car park for 168 spaces; the engineering works to manage access up the slope will be most intrusive; the loss of greenspace covered with tarmac; the noise of car engines and doors; the impact on Butcher Hill traffic.

The building of a large and tall and very ugly pavilion which will be seen for miles around.

The fact that there is more space for the bar than there is for changing facilities.

The passing of control of this publicly accessible land on which children as well as Abbey Grange pupils play to a private company which will require a lease. The question of who precisely owns this land does need to be clarified.

The fact that the provision is overwhelmingly for boys and men.

The fact that the bar will be open 7 days a week and will cause great nuisance to local residents in a variety of ways.

The fact that Powerleague will be advertising for large private functions to hire the bar area.

The loss of the present pitches on which local teams play.

The apparently poor reputation of Powerleague across the country as evidenced by information on the web.

The fact that Powerleague has not been required to go through any competitive tendering process whatsoever, against both Council policy and common sense.

The fact that control of community use will be given to a private company.

We doubt that the Governors are fully cognisant with all these issues and would request that this letter be circulated to them. We also request that the proposed contract with Powerleague is stopped. We are sending a copy of this letter to the Chief Executive of Education Leeds, to the Director of City Development and to the Bishop of Ripon and Leeds.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Elizabeth Minkin, and on behalf of Councillor Bernard Atha and Councillor John Illingworth