

This Deputation is being presented by local residents who are against the sell off, Demolition and Redevelopment of the Redundant Blackgates School at Tingley.

Several years ago Leeds City Council undertook a review of Primary School Services and in 2003 a decision was made by the city council to close and sell off Blackgates Infants School at Tingley. This School closure eventually took place in July 2005. Local residents waited for the Advertising Boards to be erected detailing the sale of the school yet nothing happened.

It came as quite a surprise for Tingley residents in September 2005 when planning notices were displayed locally detailing that a private housing developer wanted to demolish the school which had served our community since 1894 and wanted to infill the space with housing. Instead of submitting plans to bring all of the access traffic to the site via the school gates this developer has been allowed by the city council to submit plans detailing that additional traffic will be brought onto the site through the tiny cul de sac where our small children play.

So why isn't the school being offered for sale freely on the open market to be tendered for and why has this developer been allowed by the city council to apply for planning permission to demolish the school and infill the space with housing you may well be asking. Let me tell you why.

Back in 2003 this developer showed an expression of interest in purchasing Blackgates School and was given the first option to negotiate with over the purchase of the redundant school. Requests have been made to the city council for information relating to the property disposal and some of the requests made under the Freedom of Information Act have been turned down, so much for transparency!

The planning application to demolish the school and infill the space with housing went before the plans panel FAST on Thursday 9th

February this year and local residents rightly raised their concerns. Tingley residents were pleased when the plans to redevelop this site were turned down. The development department then set about forming an options appraisals report regarding the disposal of the school. Seeking transparency a request was made to inspect the options appraisal report and the request made under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act was turned down. What disturbs us Tingley residents now is that the Council has given this developer the opportunity to consider appealing against the refusal of the planning application. We have now been informed by the development department that the Builder has now considered the Council's suggestion and has decided to lodge an appeal. Who exactly is running this Council we ask? This appeal is going forward against the wishes of the public and it flies in the face of the decision made in February this year to reject the planning application by the Planning Panel East.

Whilst we understand that the Council has an obligation to obtain 'best consideration' for the redundant school we feel that the Council have poorly consulted with the local community regarding how this could be achieved without upsetting and distressing our community. The school has now become a target for vandals substance misuse and yobbish antisocial behavior and Tingley residents deserve some answers.

We would like to see the development department agree a planning brief detailing that all traffic enters and exits the site via the school gates. We ask that this Council places the safety of our children before the profits of any future development taking place at this site. We request that this matter is referred to a scrutiny board for development and that an enquiry is set up which will allow local residents to make representations to. Provide local residents with proper, decent, meaningful and transparent consultation regarding the disposal of this redundant community property and allow them to jointly agree the remit into this scrutiny enquiry.