

# Maiden Lane Tenants Association

## PFI MEETING REPORT & UPDATE

# Tenants Association meeting votes to demand halt to PFI scheme

## We demand the council do the repairs and improvements itself

Last Wednesday the Tenants Association held the promised meeting to properly discuss the council's proposed PFI.

It had been agreed that there should be a formal debate with speakers invited to put the case FOR and AGAINST PFI. That way we would hear all the arguments, be able to ask questions and make a considered judgement.

Disgracefully the council declined our invitation to attend saying they didn't think a debate would be productive.

The meeting heard from the two speaker invited to put the case against PFI: Dexter Whitfield a PFI expert from the Centre for Public Services and Alan Walter, Defend Council Housing.

Following questions and discussion it was clear that there was a strong feeling against the council pursuing PFI.

People didn't think the council was genuine about consulting tenants. The questions raised at the council's meeting in June and put in writing by the TA have still not been answered. No one knows how much the required work will cost, how much is being done anyway (like the roofs) and what the annual repairs and maintenance costs is.

It is obvious that the council wants a PFI scheme for its own reasons and so wasn't seriously looking at how it could finance the work from its own budget or help put pressure on the government to introduce the promised legislation to allow the council to borrow direct.

There was anger that whilst the council refused to attend a public debate it is calling its own meetings to try and push through its plans. It was felt important that we should stick together on Maiden Lane to get the work carried out without PFI and not let the council 'divide and rule' tenants to get it's own way.

At the end of the meeting the following policy was agreed:

1. We should oppose the PFI scheme and call on the council to immediately stop wasting our money on consultants and other PFI costs (£600,000 is earmarked!)
2. The TA demands that the council provide the full information we have requested and meet with us to discuss financing the work we need from within its budgets.
3. The council should join with tenants in putting pressure on the government to enable councils to borrow directly to finance major capital improvements
4. The TA should produce a submission to the Council Scrutiny Panel Nov 22nd meeting and ask tenants on Maiden Lane to attend the meeting to support the TA's position
5. The TA will boycott all other meetings with the council over PFI. We ask all tenants not to attend the meetings the

### The case put FOR PFI includes:

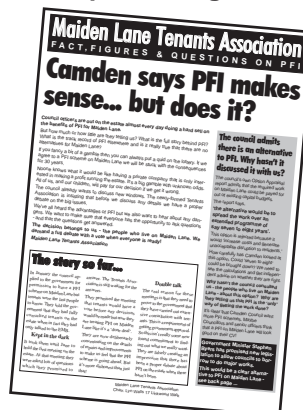
**Note:** The Council refused to provide two speakers to put the case for PFI at the meeting. The TA organised the debate so that tenants could hear all the arguments and ask questions.

It is clear from the letter sent to all tenants by the Director of Housing that the council doesn't have the confidence to debate the issues. Instead they want to meet with tenants individually or in small groups without anyone present to challenge their plans. This is not democratic and is a mis-use of our rent money to try and manipulate the outcome of a phoney consultation exercise.

### The case put AGAINST PFI includes:

- PFI is more expensive than the public sector doing the work itself
- Real problems signing a contract for 30 years - how do you hold a multi-national consortium with the best lawyers to account
- PFI firms are only interested in making a profit - not providing a service and will bend the contract to maximise their profit potential
- Proposals to demolish some flats and references to 'improve the asset value' of this 'high value site' by 'income generation' raise real dangers about asset stripping the estate.
- Tenants are kept in the dark as negotiations between the developer and the council will be kept confidential
- The PFI scheme would be an experiment (there are no existing Housing PFIs) but PFI schemes in hospitals, schools, road, prisons and other services have overrun their costs and deliver bad services

**council is organising which are an attempt to push through their proposals and avoid a proper balanced discussion whilst pretending that they are consulting.**



Have you read the four page TA Newsletter Facts, figures & Questions on PFI? Copies available from the Community Centre

The TA plans to produce its own list of repairs and improvements needed on Maiden Lane to put to the council. Send any suggestions to the TA postbox in the Community Centre...

Come and support the TA deputation to the Council Scrutiny Panel, 7pm Wed Nov 22nd, Maiden Lane Community Centre

Boycott the council's phoney consultation meetings - support the TA demands