



Bradford and Ripon & Leeds
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Cllr John Illingworth

Sent by email: john.illingworth@leeds.gov.uk

Dear Cllr Illingworth

SENT ON BEHALF OF THE BISHOP OF RIPON & LEEDS

Thank you for your copy letter of 7 March 2008, regarding the proposed siting of a Powerleague facility on the playing fields of Abbey Grange Church of England High School.

There is little doubt that wherever there is a desire to offer new opportunities and resources to certain groups within a community, there are likely to be tensions and challenges for other groups and individuals. It is my understanding that a company like Powerleague will normally undertake a relatively thorough process of research into the usage that such a facility will receive in advance of any formal proposal to build. I believe that the governors of the school and the management of Powerleague will have considered the likely usage levels of these facilities, and that they will have ascertained that there is a genuine community need for them. However, they will also be aware of the potential issues which may be raised for local residents, and I am sure they will seek to minimise these should the proposal go forward.

Fortunately, we have robust and effective planning regulations which allow for independent adjudication where the tensions arise between different groups within the community. I believe that the school is at the beginning of the statutory process of consultation with regard to the establishment of the Powerleague facility. This process allows every individual and group to raise their concerns and to make known their objections - or support - for the proposal. I am convinced that we must trust to the independence and rigour of the planning process to make decisions which on balance are in the best interests of the community as a whole. I would encourage you to make use of the statutory process.

In acknowledging your letter and your concerns I must also inform you that this is not a matter which is in the control of the Diocesan Board of Education, or of myself as Director of the Education Team. I am sure you will pass copies of all your correspondence to the governors and to Powerleague and will keep them well informed of your views. I believe that they too will trust to the appropriate statutory procedures.

Director of Education – Revd Clive Sedgewick

I do understand the concerns you have regarding this proposed sports facility and its potential impact upon you and the local residents, but I also recognise that it could bring many positives for a number of people, not least members of the school and wider community. I hope that all parties will act with consideration and appreciation of each other.

Yours sincerely

Clive Sedgewick

Director of Education – Revd Clive Sedgewick