“A DARK DAY FOR DEMOCRACY”: GARSTON FUMES AS INSPECTOR IGNORES 1,800 OBJECTIONS TO PERMIT 1,000 VEHICLE MOVEMENTS A DAY

LIVERPOOL, UK – January 12, 2026 – Garston Community United (GCU) has branded the decision to allow a massive open storage facility at Garston Industrial Estate as a “dark day for democracy,” claiming the planning system has fundamentally failed the people it is meant to protect.

Despite 1,800 formal written objections and powerful personal testimony from a long list of local residents, The Public Inquiry Inspector T. Burnham has overturned Liverpool City Council’s refusal of the scheme (Ref: APP/Z4310/W/25/3369126). The decision clears the way for a 4-hectare industrial site to operate directly adjacent to residential homes, bringing up to 1,000+ vehicle movements every single day, loading and unloading from **7:00 am until 11:00 pm.**

A Rigged Fight: The Resource Gap
As a ‘Rule 6’ Party, GCU fought a “David vs. Goliath” battle. While the developer, Peloton Real Estate, deployed a fleet of high-priced expert witnesses to "out-manoeuvre" the opposition, the community was forced to rely on its own passion and local knowledge.

"We stood our ground, but we didn’t have the deep pockets to buy the expert analysis that the developer used to drown out our voices," said a spokesperson for GCU. "On behalf of the community, Cllr Julie Fadden explained the massive residential expansion surrounding this site and the sheer harm this scheme will do to our families. It seems that in today’s planning system, the size of your wallet matters more than the lives of 8000+ residents."

Liverpool City Council: “One Arm Tied Behind Their Back”
The community expressed particular fury at the "half-hearted" defence mounted by Liverpool City Council (LCC). The Inquiry heard how the Council:
Missed critical deadlines to provide witnesses and statements.
Surrendered on Air Quality and Transport, providing zero evidence on emissions or traffic impacts.
Orchestrated its own failure, with the lead Planning Officer who recommended the scheme for approval sitting alongside the person tasked with the Council’s defence against it.
"The Council’s barrister was left fighting with one arm tied behind his back," the GCU spokesperson continued. "The Council proved through a British Standard noise model that harm would be caused, but they allowed the developer to introduce alternative models that the Inspector accepted. It felt like an orchestrated surrender from within the Town Hall."

The Pollution Blind Spot
The Inquiry’s most controversial point remained the "missing" pollution data. GCU argued that adding 1,000 vehicles to an area already impacted by the neighbouring Veolia Hazardous Chemical Reprocessing Site—without a current air quality baseline including Cumulative Impacts — was "mathematically impossible" to justify. However, the Inspector accepted the legal argument that the Environment Agency's regulation of Veolia was enough, leaving residents to breathe the consequences.

The Battle Shifts to Monitoring
While the appeal has been allowed, GCU has vowed to pivot from protesters to "watchdogs." The Inspector imposed 23 strict conditions, including a 4-metre high acoustic fence and a ban on container stacking:

"The Inspector might have signed the paper, but we are the ones who have to live with the noise, dust and emissions," the spokesperson concluded. "We will be documenting every HGV that breaks the routing rules, every noise breach, and every pothole. **If the Council won’t protect Garston, we will**, but the Council needs to protect a vulnerable community, but will they?"

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