PRESS RELEASE - 30 June 2026

Residents demand answers as £51,000 costs hit Council after Garston planning appeal and ongoing complaint delays

Garston Community United (GCU) says significant questions remain over Liverpool City Council's handling of the Peloton Real Estate planning appeal at Garston Industrial Estate (Appeal Ref: APP/Z4310/W/25/3369126), as a Stage 2 corporate complaint continues under review by the Council's Head of Corporate Anti-Fraud.

The appeal, which granted permission for a major industrial storage development with hundreds of extra lorries adjacent to residential streets in Garston, was approved by the Planning Inspectorate following more than 1,800 public objections and the Council's refusal of the application at Planning Committee stage.

GCU has now obtained information through a Freedom of Information request confirming that Liverpool City Council incurred **£51,000 additional costs** following the appeal. The Planning Inspector criticised the Council for failing to provide supporting air quality evidence and found that it acted unreasonably in maintaining an air quality refusal reason without evidential substantiation, resulting in a costs award against the authority in favour of the developer, Peloton Real Estate.

The group's concerns are now also the subject of a Stage 2 corporate complaint, which includes issues relating to the Council's handling of air quality evidence, officer engagement with the applicant, and the defence of the Planning Committee's refusal at appeal.

On **13 March 2026**, the investigating officer confirmed the Stage 2 investigation had commenced but after several missed deadlines and 3 months later, the Council advised that the investigation report had been completed and was being circulated to "relevant officers" for agreement on recommended actions prior to final issue. To date, no final report has been published and no further update has been provided.

The group has raised concerns regarding transparency in the finalisation process, including clarity over which officers are involved in agreeing the final report and whether any of those officers had prior involvement in the matters under investigation.

A spokesperson for Garston Community United said:

> "Residents engaged with this process in good faith and relied on the Council's Planning Committee decision being properly defended. The Inspector's findings, together with the costs award, raise serious questions about how air quality evidence was handled. At the same time, the complaint process has now been ongoing for several months with no final outcome or clear explanation for delay."

GCU emphasises that its concerns relate to **process, governance, evidential handling and accountability**, rather than disagreement with the planning decision itself.

The group says the combination of the Inspector's findings, the financial impact on the public purse, and continued uncertainty around the complaint process raises wider concerns about governance and learning within the Council's planning and complaints systems.

GCU is calling for:

- Publication of the Stage 2 complaint outcome without further delay
- Clarification of the "relevant officers" involved in finalising the report
- Assurance that the complaints process remains independent of the service area under review
- A review of how air quality evidence and expert witness provision were handled at appeal stage

This was issued for and on behalf of Garston Community United /L19 Action Group

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