

COUNCIL MEETING

At a meeting of the Council held in the Council Chamber, Municipal Buildings, Huyton on Wednesday, 19 September 2012, the following Members were

P r e s e n t:

Councillors

N Hogg
The Mayor
(in the Chair)

Ms D Allen, Mrs D Arnall, R Arnall, Miss S Arnall, Ms J E Aston, Ms C Bannon, D J Baum, P Boland, W Brennan, E Connor, T Cunningham, T H Fearn, Ms E Finneran, R Gaffney, Ms S E Gaffney, T Garland, E Grannell, T Grierson, Ms T Harris, A Harvey, Mrs M A Harvey, T Harvey, M Kearns, N F Keats, K Keith, Mrs P Kelly, S Lee, Ms J Lilly, D Lonergan MRICS, R S Maguire, K W McGlashan, Mrs V McNeill, A Moorhead, G J Morgan, G See, M Sharp, Ms R Smith, Ms M E Stuart, D Tully, F Walsh, Mrs H Weightman, W Weightman, B Whiley, D Williams and G A Wright.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors T Byron, D Dobbie, J B Greer, R Halpin, Mrs J Harris, Mrs D J Keats, D McEgan, Mrs K Moorhead, M Murphy, A Newman, B M O'Hare, Mrs C M O'Hare, Mrs S Powell, T Powell, Ms D M Reid, R J Round JP and B Swann.

21. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 18 July 2012 were received as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

22. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chief Executive reported that no declarations of interest had been submitted.

23. MAYORAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) Communications

(1) Written

The Mayor drew the Council's attention to the list of communications which had been circulated for the information of Members.

(2) Verbal

(i) Hillsborough

On behalf of the Leader of the Council, Councillor G Morgan, Deputy Leader of the Council, referred to the release of the report from the Hillsborough Independent Panel the previous Wednesday. The Hillsborough

disaster of 15 April 1989 had affected families from across Merseyside, and Knowsley had been no exception.

Councillor Morgan stated that he had experienced a range of emotions when watching the news coverage the previous Wednesday, which had included television pictures from 1989. The horror and devastation were once again plain to see; there was anger as the true scale of the cover-up was finally laid bare; and finally disgust as a number of the guilty parties sought to justify their appalling behaviour both on the day and in the 23 years since.

Councillor Morgan reported that, once the local authorities across the Liverpool City Region had had time to digest the report and had some clarity about the actions that needed to be taken against the various guilty parties, he hoped that something more formal could be done at a future Council meeting. In the meantime, he sought to finish on a positive note highlighting how the families of the 96, who had been fighting for 23 years for truth and justice, had now achieved the first of those goals, and they had every right to expect to achieve the second soon.

In conclusion, Councillor Morgan asked Members to join him in commending the people of Merseyside who he considered should be proud of the commitment and stamina the families had shown in continuing their fight despite the obstacles that had been put in their way.

(ii) Sonae

Councillor D Lonergan referred to the Sonae factory in Kirkby, which many people had known for some time was in financial difficulties. The company had now announced the closure of the site.

In particular, Councillor Lonergan referred to Sonae's media statement which had blamed "planning and political difficulties" for the decision to close the site. He stated that the Council had only ever received one planning application from Sonae, and the Planning Committee had approved it as quickly as it could. Unfortunately, the process had taken some time because the company had failed to submit the application with all the required information. Nevertheless, the building that was the subject of the planning application had been operating since the previous December, which was all the way through the planning process, and so Councillor Lonergan considered that the delay could not have had any impact at all on the company's fortunes.

Members were advised that senior officers from the Council had met with Sonae's senior managers shortly after planning permission had been given, and Sonae had advised of their decision to consult on the future of the plant based on business reasons.

Councillor Lonergan reported that the Knowsley Works team had been on site and meeting with the affected employees for a few weeks now. Unfortunately, given the current economy, Sonae was not the first company to close in recent years, and the Council had an excellent track record in helping people out. New placements had already been secured for the three Apprentices who had been at Sonae. Staff had also met with around 150 employees and had started the process of helping them find new jobs; for

example, the Council was paying for fork-lift truck training for around 40 staff who would then be put in touch with businesses who needed those skills.

In conclusion, Councillor Lonergan reported that the Council would continue to do everything it could to help the former employees of Sonae and he hoped that they would end up with better jobs with better employers.

(b) Recognition of Community Achievements

(i) 1438 Prescot Squadron Air Cadets

The Mayor welcomed representatives of the 1438 Prescot Squadron Air Cadets to the meeting. He reported that the Squadron had been operating for over 70 years within the Prescot area and played a role in the Civic Service of Remembrance held each year in Prescot.

Council was advised that, in April 2011, the Squadron had been nominated by Merseyside Wing Headquarters to represent them in the Sir Allan Lee's Memorial Trophy for the best RAF Air Cadet squadron within the country. The Squadron experienced a somewhat problematic year following this nomination; for example they had a break-in in November 2011 where everything of value was taken.

The Mayor reported that, although the year had been a difficult one, the Squadron had risen to the challenge and beaten 180 squadrons within the first round of the competition, and 909 within the second and final round, to finish third within the whole country and actually winning the North West stage. This had been an historic achievement as it was the first Squadron to ever compete for the first time and gain the position it did.

Councillor Ms D Allen also referred to the wonderful achievement of the Squadron, particularly given the difficulties which the Mayor had referenced. She stated that the Squadron provided a valuable service in the community, currently supporting over 60 young people within the Prescot and Whiston area: they had supported many more young people over the past 70 years.

Councillor Allen stated that the young people involved were a credit to Knowsley, the Squadron, their families and, more importantly, themselves, and joined the Mayor in offering her congratulations.

The Mayor then invited a representative to come forward to receive a certificate on behalf of the Squadron in recognition of their achievement.

(ii) Mr Bobby Campbell and Mr Joe McGuinness

Councillor Mrs E Finneran reported that, many years ago in a new Halewood estate, a group of parents had decided to form a committee to organise sporting events for the children in the area who, at that time, had no access to such facilities. The parents would meet in St Mark's social club and run events to raise money for kits and equipment. They then organised boys' football teams and girls' netball teams, running tournaments and fun days. The committee was successful, growing bigger and bigger, and was renamed the Halewood Town Sports Association.

Councillor Finneran welcomed Mr Joe McGuinness and Mr Bobby Campbell to the chamber. She reported that they had been instrumental in the running of the Association since it started almost 40 years ago. They had seen many young boys and girls grow up and, in turn, bring their own children along to take part; some were now themselves teachers in the Association and others had even become professional footballers.

In conclusion, Councillor Finneran stated that Joe and Bobby had helped to provide a valuable service to the young people who lived in their community and, on behalf of the Council, thanked them for this exceptional contribution.

The Mayor then invited Mr Campbell and Mr McGuinness to come forward to receive certificates in recognition of their contribution.

(iii) Knowsley Leisure and Culture Park – Response to Incident

Councillor E Connor welcomed two of the Council's lifeguards - John Sealy and Lynsey Phippard - and one of its swimming teachers - Karen Greer – to the Chamber. He reported that John and Lynsey had been on poolside duty at Knowsley Leisure and Culture Park when a near drowning incident occurred on 28 August 2012.

Members were advised that John had noticed a group of youngsters struggling in the pool, one of whom appeared to be motionless. Lynsey had activated the pool alarm as John took control of the situation, grabbing the motionless casualty from the other two struggling boys and bringing him onto the poolside in accordance with the Emergency Action Plan. The boy was not breathing and had no pulse and so John had performed CPR, assisted by a customer who introduced himself as a qualified doctor. During this time Lynsey cleared the pool of bathers and managed the situation poolside until further support arrived. Karen assisted with comforting the casualty and the boy's friends who were very distressed by the incident.

Councillor Connor reported that, fortunately, the boy had been revived and taken to Whiston Hospital by ambulance where he had stayed for several days after the incident. He had since made a full recovery.

Council was advised that, although John, Lynsey and Karen were doing what they were trained to do, the paramedics had stated that their quick actions had avoided a fatality. Councillor Connor also commended the other members of staff who had come to assist when they heard the alarm, as well as the doctor who had stepped forward to help.

In conclusion, Councillor Connor stated that the incident demonstrated the commitment and professionalism of all those involved, particularly John, Lynsey and Karen, and invited Members to join him in applauding their actions.

The Mayor then invited Mr Sealy, Ms Phippard and Ms Greer forward to receive certificates in recognition of their actions in response to the life-threatening incident.

24. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Mayor reported that no public questions had been submitted.

25. KNOWSLEY LOCAL PLAN: CORE STRATEGY - PUBLICATION AND SUBMISSION

The Council considered a report seeking approval to publish the Knowsley Local Plan: Core Strategy and submit it, along with supporting documents, to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.

It was noted that the Knowsley Local Plan (previously known as the Local Development Framework) would set out a vision and strategy for the future development of Knowsley and its communities up to 2028. It would provide an important delivery vehicle for the Borough's Sustainable Community Strategy.

The report set out the process undertaken; the Plan's contents; and next steps to be undertaken along with the future work programme.

Councillor D Lonergan MOVED and Councillor Ms R Smith SECONDED the recommendations within the report.

RESOLVED – That:-

- (i) the Knowsley Local Plan: Core Strategy - Proposed Submission Draft be approved;
- (ii) the Plan be published and submitted to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations (2012);
- (iii) delegated authority be granted to the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Regeneration, Economy and Skills, to:-
 - a) publish and submit to the Secretary of State a final sustainability appraisal report and other supporting documents for the Plan in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations (2012) and other legislative requirements;
 - b) publish other evidence base documents connected with the Plan; and
 - c) make any necessary typographical or other minor changes to the Plan prior to its publication and submission.

26. ECONOMIC REGENERATION STRATEGY 2012-15 AND ACTION PLAN

The Council considered a report requesting approval of the Economic Regeneration Strategy 2012-15 and Action Plan.

It was noted that Knowsley's previous Economic Regeneration Strategy (ERS) had been published in April 2008 just prior to the economic downturn. Whilst

some of the key actions within the strategy remained valid, much of it had effectively become obsolete as a result of the impact of the economic downturn. The report therefore set out the vision for the ERS 2012-15 and the three underpinning strategic goals.

Members were also advised that the Council's procurement function was a valuable lever that could help to stimulate the local economy and so the ERS had been developed alongside the refresh of the Council's Procurement Strategy. The ERS and Procurement strategy highlighted the actions necessary to maximise the contribution from procurement for the Council both from its own spend and by leveraging economies of scale from the combined City Region spend.

Councillor D Lonergan MOVED and Councillor G Morgan SECONDED the recommendation in the report.

RESOLVED – That the Economic Regeneration Strategy 2012-15 and Action Plan, referred to at Appendices 1 and 2 of the report submitted, be approved.

27. REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND PLACES

The Council considered a report outlining the outcome of the recent review of polling districts and places within the Borough following the May 2012 Borough Elections. The Council was required by legislation to carry out a review every four years (this would become every five years from October 2013) but had previously agreed to undertake this on an annual basis.

As part of the annual review, the Polling District Review Working Group had considered all of the polling station issues and identified one polling place in the Stockbridge Ward which it proposed should be moved from the Stockbridge Village Resource Centre to the new Stockbridge Village Neighbourhood Centre. Appendix A to the report submitted also referred to a number of polling districts where comments had been received and, although no changes to the locations of polling places were proposed at the current time, other action had been agreed.

Finally, the report outlined how, on occasion, designated polling places could become unavailable for use during elections at short notice, for example due to the closure of buildings or premises being used for other events. It was therefore suggested that delegated authority be granted with regard to any required changes during an election period. Such action would only be taken where absolutely necessary and following discussions with the relevant Ward Members.

Councillor K Keith MOVED and Councillor G Morgan SECONDED the recommendations in the report.

RESOLVED – That

- (i) the recent work of the Polling District Review Working Group and the Group's recommendation to amend the location of a polling place in the Stockbridge Ward (as set out at paragraph 3.2 and Appendix A to the report submitted) be endorsed;
- (ii) subject to resolution (i) above, all other polling districts and polling places within the Borough as confirmed by the 2011 polling district review remain unchanged;

- (iii) the Electoral Registration Officer be authorised to make any necessary revisions to the Electoral Register to give effect to any changes agreed by the Council; and
- (iv) the Returning Officer, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, be authorised to approve any necessary changes which may arise to polling places during an election period.

28. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS

The Council considered a report seeking approval of the appointment of a panel of independent persons to support the Council's ethical standards arrangements in accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011.

It was noted that the Council was obliged to adopt arrangements to deal with allegations of a breach of its Code of Conduct at any of the Borough's councils, including Town and Parish councils. As part of these arrangements, the Borough Council was required to appoint at least one 'Independent Person' to play a role in dealing with such complaints. The report set out what this role would entail under the Council's current ethical standards arrangements, and the recruitment process that had been undertaken.

Councillor K Keith MOVED and Councillor Ms R Smith SECONDED the recommendations in the report.

RESOLVED – That:-

- (i) Maureen Brady, Paula Dunn, Dr Ron Marsh and Keith Pickup be appointed to serve on an Independent Persons Panel supporting the Council's ethical standards arrangements for a period ending in May 2016; and
- (ii) the membership of the Independent Persons Panel be reviewed thereafter on an annual basis and subject to endorsement at the Council's Annual Meeting.

29. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1985 - SECTION 41 - JOINT AUTHORITIES

In accordance with Section 41 of the Local Government Act 1985 and Council Procedure Rule No. 11, Members of the Council were given the opportunity to raise questions in relation to the discharge of the functions of the following joint authorities, the minutes of which had been circulated previously:-

- (1) **Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority**
No questions received.
- (2) **Merseyside Integrated Transport Authority**
No questions received.
- (3) **Merseyside Police Authority**
No questions received.

(4) **Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority**

No questions received.

30. MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME

Members of the Council were given the opportunity to ask questions which had been submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule No. 11.

(1) **Tour of Britain**

Councillor D Williams directed the following question to the Deputy Leader of the Council:-

“Can the Deputy Leader comment on the recent Tour of Britain cycling event in Knowsley and, in particular, whether this was a success for our Borough?”

Councillor G Morgan, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Delivery, reported that he was pleased to update colleagues on the Tour of Britain event which had been held in Knowsley just over a week ago. The event had followed a number of other high profile and successful events hosted by the Borough over the summer - such as the Olympic Torch, the Paralympic Torch and the Knowsley Flower show - and had showcased Knowsley to the world.

Members noted that the Tour of Britain was the UK's most prestigious cycle event, with eight stages held over eight consecutive days. Councillor Morgan stated that this year's event had probably been the most high profile of any in the Tour's history, given Bradley Wiggins' historic win in the Tour de France and the incredible achievements of both the Team GB Olympic and Paralympic cycling teams.

Councillor Morgan reported that the Council itself had had to compete to secure the prestigious finish of stage two of this year's tour, a stage that had seen 100 of the world's top cyclists cycling 112 miles from Nottingham Castle to the finish line in Knowsley Safari Park. Not only had hundreds of residents lined the route, but the finish event itself had seen in the region of 5,000 people from across the North West packed into Knowsley Safari Park. For many of these people, this would have been their first visit to the Borough and this had been a fine way for Knowsley to be showcased to them. In addition, the event itself had been shown live on ITV 4 with highlights shown again in the prime time slot at 7.00 pm.

Members were advised that, on the day, almost 700 people had signed up to the 'Discover Knowsley' newsletter, which contained information on other such events that Knowsley would be planning over the coming months. The opportunity was also taken to promote the new Velodrome and BMX facility. Given the attendees on the day, interest had been extremely high in both of these facilities.

Councillor Morgan stated that, in addition to showcasing Knowsley to the world, the event also provided an opportunity to make valuable contact with potential investors and employers, and the benefit of this was already being seen in a number of ways; for example, on the day itself, Knowsley

Works was asked to support the company Omega with recruitment to 120 jobs, which would be available to unemployed residents.

Therefore, Councillor Morgan considered that the answer to Councillor Williams' question of 'was this event a success for the Borough?' was a resounding yes, and cited some of the comments that had been posted through various internet sites.

In conclusion, Councillor Morgan reported that there had been a large number of Council Members and officers involved in bringing this event to the Borough. On behalf of the Leader of the Council, Councillor Morgan thanked all of those who had helped make the event the success it was.

The Mayor also added his thanks to all the officers and Members that had been involved.

(2) **Raven Court Development**

Councillor A Harvey directed the following question to the Deputy Leader of the Council:-

"Can the Deputy Leader advise of the latest progress on the new Raven Court development in Halewood and tell us when all the facilities will be up and running?"

The Deputy Leader acknowledged the question and invited Councillor D Lonergan, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Economy and Skills, to respond.

Councillor Lonergan commenced his response by stating that he was pleased to have the opportunity to share with Council the latest progress, especially now that the new Halewood Shopping Centre was very near to completion.

Councillor Lonergan reminded Members why the Council had become involved in the project. He reported that the inaction of the private sector had resulted in Raven Court's deterioration and considered that, had the Council not intervened when it did, Halewood residents would have missed out on the new Halewood Shopping Centre and Halewood would have been blighted for decades.

Members noted that Raven Court had been a dilapidated 1960s privately-owned shopping centre. It had a handful of shop tenants, empty units going to waste and no supermarket, as well as several poor quality occupied maisonettes. Local residents were rightly fed up and had demanded that something be done, which was why the Council had stepped in and bought Raven Court.

Councillor Lonergan reported that the scheme had not been easy to put together – the Council had had to continue to manage the declining centre, buy out and relocate the remaining owners and tenants, demolish the buildings, close the roads and sort out the utilities; that was before a developer could be secured to actually build the new centre and without taking account of the recession.

However, Councillor Lonergan stated that the Council could be pleased that all of the hard work had paid off with the new development, which was to be called the Halewood Shopping Centre. The Council's development partner Neptune had attracted new large shops into Halewood, retailers such as Home Bargain, Tesco, Iceland, Card Factory and the Aldi supermarket. A range of smaller shops would add to the shopping experience on offer to residents.

Members noted that the shops would be open to the public in the next few weeks when the retailers had finished their shop fitting work. In fact, some of the units were already open and Councillor Lonergan stated that he was pleased to advise that the Mayor would be in Halewood on the morning of 4 October for the grand opening of the Borough's first Aldi supermarket.

Councillor Lonergan reported that the new 45,000 square foot Halewood Shopping Centre had been carefully designed. New bus facilities would bring public transport into the heart of the development making it easier for all residents to access the shops as well as the Halewood Centre, which was conveniently located next door with its superb range of Council, health and partner facilities. The whole development programme followed investment exceeding £20m into the heart of Halewood.

In conclusion, Councillor Lonergan stated that the end result was a remarkable achievement driven by the public sector, and the transformation of the site was a fantastic example of what the Council could achieve when it was allowed to do so.

31. NOTICES OF MOTION

(1) Construction Industry Blacklists

The Council considered the following motion, proposed by Councillor Ms S Gaffney and seconded by Councillor K Keith, notice of which had been given in accordance with Council Procedure Rule No. 12:

"A number of construction companies have been challenged about supporting the existence of and subscribing to construction industry 'blacklists', which detail covertly gathered information on construction trade unionism, militant tendencies, poor timekeeping, trouble making, etc. Blacklisting is an unacceptable practice and cannot be condoned. The GMB union is leading a national campaign aimed at forcing those who have been involved in blacklisting to apologise to those who have been affected by it.

It is understood that the construction industry blacklist was collated by the Consulting Association (a private consultancy) and was then provided at a cost to construction companies as they sought to recruit/avoid new workers. The Information Commissioner has investigated and taken action against the Consulting Association for this practice. Furthermore, the Information Commissioner has taken enforcement action against a number of construction companies based on the evidence recovered from the Consulting Association.

Owing to the concentration of construction activity in and around large cities, many of those alleged to have been discriminated against live in the country's major cities, and undoubtedly this practice has disadvantaged residents of Knowsley.

Given the potential impact on residents of this Borough, the Council resolves to support the GMB campaign.”

RESOLVED – That the motion be unanimously approved.

(2) **Energy Bill Revolution**

The Council considered the following motion, proposed by Councillor D Lonergan and seconded by Councillor E Connor, notice of which had been given in accordance with Council Procedure Rule No. 12:

“The Energy Revolution is a new campaign which is designed to tackle fuel poverty. A household is considered to be in fuel poverty if it needs to spend more than 10% of its income on fuel for adequate heating.

Rising fuel bills cause huge financial hardship in our Borough and, despite our best efforts, we estimate that there remain 14,500 Knowsley households (over 23%) who are currently struggling to pay their fuel bills.

The current Government is putting in place policies which they say are designed to address the situation, but official projections show that these policies will fall far short of delivering the measures needed to end fuel poverty and to reduce carbon emissions.

There is therefore a strong case that the Government should use the money raised from carbon taxes to help make super energy efficient homes, which should include excellent insulation, renewable energy, and modern boilers. Not only would action of this nature help hard-pressed communities such as those in Knowsley, but it would also cut carbon emissions and create thousands of jobs at a time when the country’s economy is reeling from this Government’s other failing policies.

There is enough carbon tax revenue to make homes super efficient and to bring 9 out of 10 homes out of fuel poverty, reducing household energy bills by £310 per year.

This national campaign is supported by over a hundred organisations, including all of the major children’s charities, and numerous environmental groups and local authorities. The campaign is about making sure that the national Government does the right thing for the whole country.

This Council therefore resolves to support the campaign to secure the Energy Bill Revolution.”

RESOLVED – That the motion be unanimously approved.

Minutes 21 to 31 received as a correct record the 12th day of December 2012.

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The Mayor

(The meeting closed at 6.42 pm)