

From: Clein, Paul
Sent: 26 March 2008 22:19
To: /The Liberal Democrat Group Councilors
Subject: Resignation

Colleagues,

This is to advise you that I have submitted to the Chief Executive my resignation as Executive Member for Children's Services with effect from 12-01 a.m. March 27th 2008.

In truth, because of the actions of Cllrs. Bradley and Storey, who appear to believe that addressing the financial situation of the City is far less important than trying to exact petty revenge - something I have said to their faces - I have been considering my position since late November 2007.

At that time, I decided (just) to remain where I was, not least because I was very conscious that the 2008/9 budget setting process would be the most difficult of our 10 years as the Council administration. In addition, having made the cardinal error of finishing second in the December 2005 leadership contest, I was acutely aware that my reasons for any decision to step down at that time would inevitably have been misinterpreted as being motivated solely by self interest. That is not what makes me tick. The long term interests of the only political party to which I have ever belonged are what has triggered my decision. Consequently, I went along with a number of policies about which I had misgivings on the premise that I could more effectively try to change things for the better (e.g. the Big Dig, HMRI) from inside the tent rather than outside. As a strategy, that has achieved some success. In retrospect, I feared right from the start - when Cllr. Storey was handed a specially created cabinet position within a few short weeks of being instructed by the Standards Board to step

27/03/2008

down as Council Leader - that history would repeat itself and that the fallout from the Henshaw/Storey split would become self perpetuating. I thought at the time that that appointment by Warren was a cross decision. It is not just me - the Leader is aware of the findings of the recent IdEA internal review but has not acted on it.

I became a Liberal Democrat for a number of reasons, for example the lack of a party whipping system, meaning that I would not have to vote for things with which I disagreed in principle. For me, what marks out our party as different from the others is, firstly, that we are all signed up to a set of basic liberal principles within which we try to devise and deliver policies and, secondly, that our occasional internal disagreements - unlike the Labour Party - do not descend into personal animosity. In my view, the ability to freely express dissent from the views of the leadership, local or national, without fear of reprisal largely makes our party what it is and may it always remain so.

I found the deselection of my friend and colleague Ann Hines upsetting enough. However, the Stalinist treatment of my friend and colleague Kevin Pirth is intolerable and utterly illiberal. This is the last straw for me and I can stand it no longer. I have no doubt whatsoever that - amongst other reasons - Kevin's deselection was engineered for his having had the audacity to ask the group Leader in a private group meeting a number of entirely legitimate questions over a matter whose fallout threatens the long term interests of our group. (Where is Warren's promised writ for the Daily Post by the way? I think we should be told.)

The "colleagues" who perpetrated this should hang their heads in shame. I believe they have betrayed the basic principles we are all supposed to agree with. My remaining as a member of an Executive Board with at least four such "colleagues" could be seen as going along with, or tacit approval of, this disgraceful episode and I have therefore concluded that my position is untenable. Any lingering doubts I might have had about my course of action were dispelled on seeing Kevin's email to the group on Tuesday.

I became a Councillor in the first place because I was determined to do something to reverse the decline of our school system under Labour which had let down successive generations of Liverpool children. Together, our group has succeeded significantly in that aim since 1998 and consequently have improved the life chances of many thousands of Liverpool's young people, making it far less likely that they will become "enslaved by poverty, ignorance or conformity

People seem to have forgotten just how big a mess we inherited from our Labour predecessors. That is what makes this latest episode and our recent travails so infuriating to me. As an administration, we have achieved so much in the past 10 years on so many fronts and have a good narrative to tell, especially about our main priorities and I am particularly proud that despite the Council's poor overall CPA rating,

27/03/2008

Children's Services maintained a three star rating. Instead of being able to do that, it is all being swamped by the fallout caused by the serial failure of our twin headed Leadership to act within our party's basic principles. It is not as if the Labour Party is offering the City any viable or coherent alternative with their constant lies, smears and carping.

In my view, the Liberal Democrat group on Liverpool City Council exists to deliver Liberal Democrat policies and Liberal Democrat principles. It does not and should not exist having as its main purpose merely to maintain a small, increasingly illiberal clique in positions of power, positions whose main focus seems to have become obsessive revenge. That must change or our group will soon become increasingly politically irrelevant.

Regards Paul Clein

DISCLAIMER:

The information in this e-mail is confidential and may be read, copied or used only by the intended recipient(s). If you have received it in error please contact the sender immediately by returning the e-mail or by telephoning a number contained in the body of the e-mail then and please delete the e-mail without disclosing its contents elsewhere. No responsibility is accepted for loss or damage arising from viruses or changes made to this message after it was sent. The views contained in this email are those of the author and not necessarily those of the author's employer or service provider.

This email has been automatically scanned for viruses and malicious content by MessageLabs for your protection