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NEWS RELEASE

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STARTS

Leading Lib-Dem Calls For Minister To Resign Or Be Sacked

Councillor David Watts, the leader of the Lib-Dems on Broxtowe Borough Council, has called for Lib-Dem minister Andrew Stunnell (Under Secretary of State at the Department Of Communities and Local Government) to resign or be sacked.

In a letter in today's Liberal Democrat News, the party's national newspaper, Cllr Watts criticises Mr Stunnell for his poor performance as a minister. Speaking after publication Cllr Watts said:

“Councils are having to put up with loads of silly ideas coming from the DCLG. Most of those seem to have been whims from Eric Pickles, the secretary of state. Part of Mr Stunnell's job should be to stop this happening, and sadly he just hasn't been able to do that. For me the last straw was his response to the recent debate on protecting the green belt in parliament. MP's queued up to express their concerns about the new National Planning Policy Framework and the impact that this will have, but rather than deal with any of these he just made silly debating points. Being a minister means rising far above that sort of approach. It's time for him to go and let someone else bring some sanity to that department.”

As well as the letter in the Liberal Democrat News Cllr Watts has also written directly to Mr Stunnell telling him of his concerns and asking him to stand aside.

ENDS

Notes For Editors:

1. Andrew Stunnell is the Under Secretary of State in the department for Communities and Local Government, and the only Liberal Democrat minister in that department.

2. DCLG recently published their draft National Planning Policy Framework, which has been heavily criticised by organisations as diverse as the National Trust and the Daily Telegraph. The main criticism has been that it reduces protection to the green belt, and many have obtained legal advice that this would be the effect. Mr Stunnell's response when asked about this in parliament was that he didn't like the choice of lawyers.
3. The DCLG also announced recently that they would make money available for councils to return to weekly black bin collections, despite the fact this is not covered in the coalition agreement at all.
4. The DCLG has developed a reputation for allowing applications from developers to be built in the green belt, despite objections from local authorities.
5. The debate on the green belt took place in Westminster Hall and was organised by Anna Soubry, the MP for Broxtowe.

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