



Department for
Communities and
Local Government

Baroness Stowell of Beeston MBE
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State

**Department for Communities and Local
Government**

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Councillor Jon Collins
Leader, Nottingham City Council
Loxley House
Station Street
Nottingham
NG2 3NG

24 April 2014

Dear Councillor Collins,

Lancaster House, Nottingham – Section 215 Notice

Just before the Easter weekend, your Council served the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government with a notice under Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 in respect of Lancaster House.

This included briefing by the Council to the national media, asserting: *“Eric Pickles’ department has been accused of failing to keep rubbish clear from the building it owns... Sam Webster, a councillor on the city council, told the BBC: ‘I hope Mr Pickles is here this weekend and cleans some black bags out himself.’”, Independent, 19 April 2014).*

This building is not owned, leased, occupied or managed by the Government and we have absolutely no legal responsibility for it. It is owned by private landlords.

DCLG has never occupied this property as such, but the Secretary of State is the legal title holder for a large amount of the Civil Estate. I would note that the occupation and lease of the property by another government agency ended in August 2012. Accordingly, your notice was wrongly served. I enclose a copy of our formal response from our lawyers making this point in robust legal terms.

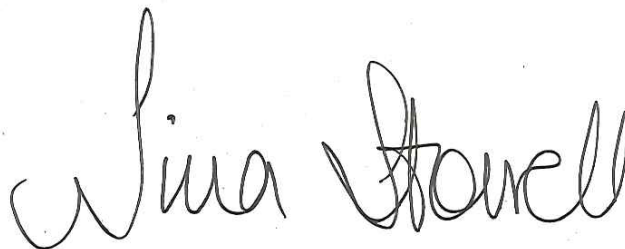
Had the Council bothered to undertake proper research and check the facts, this expense to local and national taxpayers could have been avoided. I can only reasonably conclude that this was a political stunt by the Council – but one which has backfired given the Council’s claims are demonstrably untrue and given taxpayers’ money has been wasted as a result.

I would suggest it would be gentlemanly for the Council to offer an apology to the Secretary of State, given the unjustified and unfounded personal attack. If the Council declines to give one, the public will be able to draw their own conclusions on how your councillors conduct

themselves in public life.

I am copying this letter to Cllr Sam Webster at Nottingham City Council and placing it in the public domain.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tina Stowell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first name "Tina" is written with a large, looped 'T' and a small dot over the 'i'. The last name "Stowell" is written with a large 'S' and a small dot over the 'i'. The signature is centered on the page.

TINA STOWELL