

Press Release

**From Councillor Barry Stamp
Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group
Stafford Borough Council**

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Council Leader Challenged To Say No To Fulltime Mayor

The Leader of Stafford Borough Council has today been challenged to say whether she and the rest of her cabinet colleagues support the Conservative party's proposal to see major Boroughs and Cities elect powerful full time mayors.

The challenge was made just hours after Michael Heseltine put forward the proposal at last weeks Conservative Spring Conference. Stafford Borough Council's Liberal Democrat Group Leader Barry Stamp said he was appalled that the Conservatives could be even thinking about taking decision making away from Councillors and local residents and putting power in the hands of just one person.

"Over the past few years there as certainly be a steady trend for Council decisions to be taken by fewer and fewer people. Before the Conservatives took control of Stafford Borough Council thee years ago they constantly complained that it was not right that eight members of the then cabinet took all the decisions. However within days of taking over control they reduced this number down to six. Now Michael Heseltine is suggesting major boroughs and cities should elect fulltime mayors and that they should have total control on how the town or city operates. I am appalled at this suggestion which gives all the power to one person. The last three years have shown just how little the six members of the Borough Council's cabinet listen to the rest of the Council, so the thought of having just one person in charge is really worrying. I certainly would not want to see that happen in Stafford. I do think it is important that local residents know whether Cllr Dalgarno and her cabinet colleagues support the introduction of full time mayors, and whether or not they will fight any proposals that Michael Heseltine and David Cameron make to ensure they are introduced," said Barry Stamp.

"I believe that the current system where only six people take decision on behalf of all the residents of Stafford Borough is not good for democracy. Time and time again I'm told that the Council never listens. How much worse will it be if fulltime mayors are introduced? I have now written to Cllr Dalgarno asking her and her cabinet colleagues to support me in opposing the introduction of fulltime mayors," added Cllr Stamp.

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