



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Sir Gus O'Donnell
Cabinet Secretary
Cabinet Office
70 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2AS

14 October 2011

Dear Sir Gus O'Donnell,

I was alarmed to see reports today that the Minister for Government Policy at the Cabinet Office, Mr Oliver Letwin, has been seen repeatedly discarding official government documents – some said to deal with intelligence and counter-terrorism – in a bin in a central London park.

I was also somewhat surprised and concerned to hear the rather complacent response from the Minister about this important issue. A spokeswoman has said this morning that: "Oliver Letwin does some of his parliamentary and constituency correspondence in the park before going to work and sometimes disposes of copies of letters there. They are not documents of a sensitive nature."

Can you ensure that the Cabinet Office will begin an investigation, as a matter of urgency, to ascertain the classification of the discarded documents, how many have been discarded in this manner and whether the strict procedures for the disposal of government documents has been breached.

I am sure you will agree that Ministers have a duty to follow proper procedures and lead by example. This has clearly not happened in the case of Mr Letwin. As you are aware, Civil Servants are subject to disciplinary procedures if the proper processes are not adhered to. It cannot be that there is one rule for Ministers and another for everyone else.

I would be grateful if you could investigate these matters as soon as possible and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Dugher".

Michael Dugher MP
Shadow Minister without Portfolio (Cabinet Office)