

BRIMSTONE

Still not clear if Spad remains DUP member

The party membership status of former DUP special advisor (Spad) Stephen Brimstone remains a mystery as the News Letter continues to seek clarification around the circumstances of his resignation in November.

Mr Brimstone has confirmed he is a claimant under the controversial Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) scheme, but the party has repeatedly said he was planning to "pursue other interests" before the RHI crisis began.

He was appointed as one of four DUP Spads at Stormont Castle by Arlene Foster last year but resigned from his position in November - two weeks before a BBC Spotlight programme on the controversial green energy scheme.

The botched 'cash for ash' scandal is centred on the non-domestic (commercial) component of the overly generous scheme, which could cost taxpayers up to £490 million over the next 20 years.

A DUP spokesman said Mr Brimstone had indicated as far back as the 2016 election "that he may not remain in post for a long period of time and would seek to pursue opportunities in the private sector".

Earlier this week, TUV leader Jim Allister claimed that Mr Brimstone had removed a new wood pellet boiler from his new house in order to install a similar boiler to make himself eligible for the RHI scheme.

Speaking under privilege in the Assembly chamber, Mr Allister said the ex-Spad was "heating his house on the non-domestic boiler scheme," and added: "Is that right? Is that how things should be under this scheme?"

Yesterday, a DUP spokesman said he understood that Mr Brimstone was not intending to comment on claims made by Mr Allister. The spokesman said: "The party does not comment on membership issues."



Stephen Brimstone

