

Appendix B

Report of the Commissioning Body

Appointment of the Chair and General Update

2 July 2019

Prepared for:

CSE Inquiry Member Advisory Group - 9 July 2019
Telford & Wrekin Council's Cabinet - 11 July 2019

Introduction

1. On 10 June 2019, the Commissioning Body of the Independent Inquiry into Telford Child Sexual Exploitation (the "Inquiry") appointed Tom Crowther QC to be the independent Chair of the Inquiry.
2. The purpose of this report is to update members on the Commissioning Body's recruitment process which led to the appointment of the Chair, as well as to provide a general update on the Commissioning Body's work.

Role of the Chair - Advertisement and Response

3. As members will be aware, a draft recruitment pack for the role of the independent Chair was prepared by the Commissioning Body and delivered to the CSE Inquiry Member Advisory Group (the "MAG") on 12 February 2019 and Telford & Wrekin Council's Cabinet (the "Cabinet") on 14 February 2019, for noting, comment and observations. This was delivered as Part A of the Final Commission. At its meeting on 14 February 2019, the Cabinet approved the recommendations from the Commissioning Body to start the recruitment process for the Chair.
4. Shortly following these meetings, on 19 February 2019, the role of Chair was advertised. Bearing in mind the qualities and attributes which the Commissioning Body was seeking from the successful candidate, as outlined in the recruitment pack, it was considered likely that potential candidates would have either a social care, legal or academic background. The Commissioning Body did not wish to pre-judge the background of the successful candidate, and therefore advertised the role in a spread of locations, these all being forums to target relevant professionals who may possess the skills identified:
 - 4.1 Guardian Jobs – a location which lists high calibre vacancies across a range of sectors;
 - 4.2 Counsel Magazine – the monthly journal of the bar, which is sent to approximately 15,000 barristers and Judges. The advert appeared in the annual 'silk' edition; and
 - 4.3 Community Care – the website used by those in the social care sector, for news and job posts, with an e-newsletter sent to 30,000 social work professionals.
5. The job posting was open for one month.
6. In response to the advertisement, during that one month period, the Commissioning Body received 47 requests for a copy of the recruitment pack; these requests came from potential candidates via all three advertising forums referred to above.

Applications and Recruitment Process

7. The deadline for applications for the position of Chair closed on 19 March 2019. By this date, the Commissioning Body had received ten applications. For fairness and data protection reasons, the Commissioning Body does not consider it appropriate, nor necessary, to share the details of the ten candidates who applied.

The Commissioning Body is however able to share some generic details about the backgrounds of those ten candidates, as follows:

Number of those applicants with legal background	5
Number of those applicants with non-legal background	5
Male applicants	5
Female applicants	5

8. The recruitment process then consisted of the following stages:
 - 8.1 Applicant sift - The ten applications were sifted by the Commissioning Body and the most suitable candidates were invited for interview;
 - 8.2 Formal interview - The Commissioning Body carried out formal interviews with seven of the ten candidates. Four of those candidates were successful at the interview and were taken to the next stage;
 - 8.3 Meeting with the Survivors Committee - The next stage was for the four short-listed candidates to meet with the local Survivors Committee. It was a vital part of the recruitment process that the views of the Survivors Committee were sought on the proposed candidates. The Commissioning Body attended these sessions as observers, but the sessions were run by the Survivors Committee. Following the sessions, the Survivors Committee provided their feedback on each of the candidates to the Commissioning Body.
9. In taking their decision, the Commissioning Body took into account: the contents of the candidates' application forms; the performance of the candidates at both formal interview stage and during the meeting with the Survivors Committee; and the views and comments of the Survivors Committee.
10. The final stage of the process involved undertaking due diligence on the final candidates. This included taking up references and undertaking independent searches into their background.
11. On Friday 7 June 2019, the Commissioning Body offered the role to Tom Crowther QC. Mr Crowther accepted that appointment, the contract was signed and appointment formally announced on Monday 10 June 2019.

General Update

12. Since the last update provided to the MAG and the Cabinet, the Commissioning Body has been undertaking further work to design the Inquiry's framework, including liaising with Telford & Wrekin Council to ensure it puts in place appropriate support for those engaging with the Inquiry's work. It has also begun engaging with key stakeholders, as it is required to do as part of the services to be delivered by the Commissioning Body.
13. A summary of the key steps taken since the last update is set out below:

- 13.1 The Commissioning Body has been in contact with the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse ("IICSA") and the team running the investigation into Child Sexual Exploitation by Organised Networks. IICSA's investigation had referred to specific instances of child sexual exploitation ("CSE") in Telford at an early stage and IICSA's Truth Project has also visited Telford and spoken to survivors. Given the potential for survivors to be involved with both inquiries and all that brings, the Commissioning Body wanted to make contact and establish lines of communication with IICSA, to ensure that any cross-over between the two inquiries could be addressed at an early stage, to reduce the impact on survivors. The response from IICSA made it clear that IICSA's investigation will not be using Telford as one of its six case studies, and therefore IICSA did not anticipate there being any cross-over between the two inquiries;
- 13.2 The Commissioning Body has contacted key stakeholder organisations with a request to preserve any potentially relevant documentation in advance of the Terms of Reference being finalised and more specific requests for documents being made by the Inquiry, and to suspend any document destruction policies in place;
- 13.3 In respect of the Inquiry's Terms of Reference, the Commissioning Body has held discussions with the local Survivors Committee concerning the Terms of Reference, and further details in respect of the consultation process for the Inquiry's Terms of Reference are referred to in our Appendix D Report;
- 13.4 Other communications include responding to approaches from potential witnesses;
- 13.5 There has also been liaison with Telford & Wrekin Council to ensure adequate and appropriate witness support is in place for the work of the Inquiry; and
- 13.6 Finally, further work has been undertaken in relation to establishing the Inquiry's IT systems and governance structures to support the Chair's work, including setting up a case management system, preparing the Inquiry's privacy policy and implementing structures and processes to ensure the protection of personal data.
14. These steps have been taken to ensure that, once the Inquiry's Terms of Reference have been finalised, work can begin without delay.

Eversheds Sutherland (International) LLP
Commissioning Body
Independent Inquiry Telford Child Sexual Exploitation

2 July 2019

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Members to note the Commissioning Body's update on the recruitment and appointment of the independent Chair, and the general update on progress with establishing the Inquiry, as set out in the Appendix B Report.