

## **Appendix C**

### **Report of the Commissioning Body**

#### **Part B, Final Commission – Inquiry Process**

**2 July 2019**

Prepared for:

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

## **Introduction**

1. The Commissioning Body's previous report presented 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 explained that the Commissioning Body's Final Commission would be split into two parts, Part A and Part B, as follows:
  - 1.1 Part A being the process for the recruitment of the Chair of the Independent Inquiry into Telford Child Sexual Exploitation (the "Inquiry"); and
  - 1.2 Part B being the final Terms of Reference and design of the inquiry process, with input from the Chair of the Inquiry.
2. The Final Commission was split in this way to enable the recruitment of the Chair to proceed without delay, whilst allowing work on Part B to continue, ready to be finalised soon after the appointment of the Chair. This was designed to ensure that any delay in the process is minimised, than would otherwise have been the case if the Final Commission was not split in this way.
3. On 10 June 2019, the Commissioning Body appointed Tom Crowther QC to be the Chair of the Inquiry. Since the Chair's appointment, the Chair and the Commissioning Body have been working together to finalise and deliver Part B of the Final Commission. As referred to above, Part B consists of:
  - 3.1 The Inquiry's final Terms of Reference; and
  - 3.2 The design of the inquiry process.
4. This report addresses the design of the inquiry process. The Inquiry's final Terms of Reference are addressed in the Appendix D Report that form part of the papers put before the MAG and the Cabinet.

## **The Inquiry Process**

5. As at the date of this Report, both the Chair and the Commissioning Body have yet to receive any documentation that may be relevant to the Inquiry. That is not necessarily unexpected given that the Inquiry's Terms of Reference have yet to be finalised. The Chair and the Commissioning Body also have a limited understanding as to how many witnesses might have relevant evidence to provide, and be willing to engage with its work. As a result, the scale of the work that faces the Inquiry, for example the number of documents that will need to be reviewed and analysed, the number of witnesses that will need to be spoken to, and the various lines of investigation that will be involved, remains unknown. This means that designing an inquiry process with a fixed timetable is a challenge.
6. Inevitably, unexpected issues can also arise during the course of an inquiry's work, which impacts both timescales and the various planned stages. For example, a key witness could provide evidence towards the end of the inquiry process, which results in further lines of investigation and analysis being required. As a result, any process that is designed must have a degree of flexibility; if the

process is rigid, it could hamper the Chair's ability to meet the Inquiry's Terms of Reference.

7. Despite these factors, the Commissioning Body appreciates that the public, witnesses and key stakeholders who will be involved with the Inquiry will want to have a better understanding of the Inquiry's work and potential timetable, even at this early stage. The Commissioning Body and the Chair have therefore designed an inquiry process, which sets out the likely key stages of the Inquiry's work, and the current anticipated timescales. The progress and the time taken for each stage is however entirely dependent on a number of factors, including:
  - 7.1 Documents relevant to the Inquiry's Terms of Reference and documents specifically requested being provided by stakeholders in a timely and thorough manner;
  - 7.2 Witnesses coming forward to speak to the Inquiry and provide evidence, in circumstances where the Inquiry has no power to compel witnesses to provide evidence; and
  - 7.3 Pro-active engagement by key stakeholders in relation to any data protection concerns.
8. The Inquiry process will therefore have to remain flexible. Regular progress reports will however be published so that there is visibility as to progress and the current stage that the Inquiry's work is at.
9. A copy of the provisional inquiry process appears at Annex 1 to this Report.
10. The provisional inquiry process is provided for Members to consider, note and pass on any observations to Cabinet for approval. Members are asked to note that the Council, in any forum, will not influence Part B of the Final Commission, but it does have a fiduciary duty to carry out checks and balances on the work of the Commissioning Body and the Chair.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**1. Members to comment upon the provisional inquiry process, which forms part of the Final Commission, Part B, as proposed by the Chair and the Commissioning Body in Annex 1 to this Report, and pass those comments on to Cabinet.**

**2 July 2019**

**Eversheds Sutherland (International) LLP  
Commissioning Body**