



Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Full Council

Thursday 18 July 2024

CSE Inquiry – Final Report of Independent Chair

Cabinet Member:	Cllr Lee Carter – Cabinet Member: Place (The Economy & Neighbourhood Services)
Lead Director:	Anthea Lowe – Director: Policy & Governance
Service Area:	Policy & Governance
Report Author:	Anthea Lowe – Director: Policy & Governance
Officer Contact Details:	Tel: 01952 383219 Email: anthea.lowe@telford.gov.uk
Wards Affected:	All Wards
Key Decision:	Not Applicable
Forward Plan:	Not Applicable
Report considered by:	Full Council – 18 July 2024

1.0 Recommendations for decision/noting:

It is recommended that Full Council:-

- 1.1 Notes the outcome of the review undertaken by the Independent Chair of the Inquiry into CSE in Telford;
- 1.2 Endorses the work of officers in progressing the recommendations contained within the report of the Independent Inquiry into CSE in Telford published on 12 July 2022;
- 1.3 Agrees to continue working with partners and the lived experience consultees through the independently-chaired Strategic Implementation Group to ensure that continuous improvement in relation to CSE is undertaken inclusive of those with lived experience;

CSE Inquiry - Update

- 1.4 Reaffirms its commitment, made through the budget-setting process and via Cabinet, to maintaining funding for the CATE team as set out in recommendation 7 of the Inquiry's report published on 12 July 2022;
- 1.5 Asks officers to take steps through the budget-setting process for 2025/26 to ensure funding for Children's Safeguarding and for The Holly Project; and
- 1.6 Offers its sincere thanks and gratitude to the three independent lived experience consultees, Holly Archer, Scarlett Jones and Joanne Phillips for their commitment in supporting the Council to fulfil its recommendations.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide full Council with the opportunity to receive and consider the final report of the Independent Inquiry into Telford CSE, written by the Independent Chair, Tom Crowther KC.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 In 2018, the Council commissioned an Independent Inquiry into CSE within Telford. This Inquiry was undertaken by the Independent Chair, Tom Crowther KC (a former Judge) who was appointed in 2019 and published the Report in July 2022.
- 3.2 The Report comprised more than 1,200 pages and contained 47 recommendations which can be broken down into 148 actions. These recommendations and actions are shared across the Council, West Mercia Police, West Mercia Police & Crime Commissioner and the Integrated Care Board (including health providers).
- 3.3 The Council has sole responsibility for implementing 29 recommendations comprising 82 actions.
- 3.4 The Terms of Reference for the Inquiry included provision for the Independent Chair to return 2 years' post-publication of his report to assess the progress of those organisations in the implementation of his recommendations. Following publication of the report, the Leader confirmed that the Council would be in a position to invite the Independent Chair's return at the end of 2023. On 30 December 2023, the Council wrote to the Chair inviting him to commence his review – this was 7 months' earlier than initially anticipated in the Terms of Reference.
- 3.5 Following the publication of the Report, the Council engaged with three individuals with lived experience of CSE to help shape its response to the recommendations. Each of these individuals has experience of working in the field of CSE, modern slavery and human trafficking, providing support to others who have experienced CSE, training professionals across the country and providing advice to the government and non-governmental organisations on such matters.

- 3.6 These individuals provide valuable insight through their professional work, their lived experience and the contact they have with victims and survivors. This has enabled the Council to shape its response to the recommendations in a way which is inclusive of those with lived experience and with the benefit of the skills and knowledge of those directly working with victims and survivors of CSE, modern slavery and human trafficking.
- 3.7 The Council has been clear that the Independent Chair would reach a view as to whether or not actions have been implemented effectively when he undertook his review.
- 3.8 Many of the recommendations involved the Lived Experience Consultees and practitioners working together to co-produce key materials that are now used in day to day practice across a range of professionals within the Council, the health system and educational establishments. For each and every recommendation, the Lived Experience Consultees were consulted with and provided with documents and other materials to seek views on areas for improvement.
- 3.10 Prior to inviting the Independent Chair to return to Telford & Wrekin, the Council's Internal Audit team reviewed the evidence in respect of each recommendation to ensure sufficient and appropriate information was provided to the Chair to demonstrate what action the Council has taken in respect of each recommendation.
- 3.11 The Council working with the other key stakeholders provided a narrative report to the Independent Chair setting out the methodology adopted in respect of implementation and summarising the evidence available in respect of each recommendation. This enabled the Chair to focus on the documentary evidence prior to meeting with any individuals he wished to speak to as part of this review.
- 3.12 Over two weeks in March 2024, the Independent Chair visited Telford to meet with representatives from Telford & Wrekin Council, West Mercia Police, West Mercia Police & Crime Commissioner, the ICB, educational settings and the lived experience consultees to discuss, in more detail, the recommendations relating to each organisation.
- 3.13 The Independent Chair published his report at 11.30am on Tuesday 16th July 2024. Given that the next meeting of the Full Council is not until November 2024, the Mayor has confirmed that, by reason of special circumstances, this matter should be reported to this meeting for consideration under the urgency provisions contained in s.100B of the Local Government Act 1972.

4.0 Current position

- 4.1 The Independent Chair published his report on Tuesday 16th July 2024 with a copy being available at **Appendix A**. In it, he recognises the incredible amount of work undertaken by the Council in respect of the recommendations. The Independent Chair is particularly pleased with the decision of the Council, taken just two days after publication of the report in July 2022, to work with those with lived experience when implementing the recommendations. On this point, he wrote:-

Perhaps the most impressive response, and one that was not part of my Recommendations, was the decision by the Council to work closely with three victims / survivors, who acted as independent lived experience consultees (“ILECS”) at all stages of the Council’s response – from the governance and oversight structures for managing the Council’s response...to attending meetings with all stakeholder bodies to consider progress with implementation of Recommendations; and to partnering with some to deliver training.

4.2 For a number of the recommendations that are the responsibility of the Council, the Chair sets out that the work undertaken goes further than he had envisaged when writing his recommendations.

4.3 Perhaps most important is the fact that the Chair considers that the Council as a whole has embraced the recommendations of the Inquiry and recognises the importance of the work undertaken and is keen to ensure that changes are made, writing:-

I have, however, been struck throughout this Review by a pervasive enthusiasm for the way the Council has gone about implementing the Recommendations, and by tangible pride in the result.....

I have seen a Council that recognises the stain of the past, but does not attempt to ignore it or erase it; rather to learn from it, to engage its partners and ensure that the next generations of Telford’s children will be safer than the last. Telford may be regarded as having been a “pariah town”, but I consider at the conclusion of this Review that it is now an admirable model from which others can learn, when it comes to holding up a mirror to itself by commissioning this Inquiry, investigating what has gone wrong, why and how, learning from this and taking bold action, with the most important of objectives – safeguarding children from CSE.

4.4 The Chair also issued a video to support the publication of his final report, which is available at [The Independent Inquiry into child sexual exploitation in Telford \(iitcse.com\)](http://TheIndependentInquiryintochildsexualexploitationinTelford(iitcse.com)).

4.5 Moving forward, it is proposed that the updates will be reported to Full Council on the continuous improvement work carried out as a result of the Inquiry through the Annual CSE report.

5.0 Council Priorities

5.1 This report links to the following Council priorities:-

- Every child, young person and adult lives well in their community;
- All neighbourhoods are a great place to live; and
- A community-focussed innovative council providing efficient, effective and quality services.

6.0 Financial Implications

6.1 Any financial implications arising from this report will be managed through the usual budget-setting process and from existing resources. Advice on individual proposals has been provided throughout the implementation process.

7.0 Legal and HR Implications

7.1 There are no legal and / or HR implications directly arising from this report. Appropriate legal advice has been given throughout the implementation process and will continue to be given in respect of any further action taken in connection with the recommendations.

8.0 Ward Implications

8.1 There are no ward implications directly relating to this report.

9.0 Health, Social and Economic Implications

9.1 Some of the actions taken to address the implementation of recommendations have health, social and economic implications. Where this is the case, advice has been given on an individual basis.

10.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

10.1 Whilst there are no equality and diversity implications directly relating to this report, individual proposals arising out of the implementation of recommendations are such that they have contributed to a more inclusive approach within some of the Council's services. It is also considered that the involvement of those with lived experience will support the Council's inclusivity aims.

11.0 Climate Change and Environmental Implications

11.1 There are no climate change and environmental implications directly relating to this report.

12.0 Background Papers

- 1 Report of the Independent Inquiry into CSE in Telford, available [here](#).
- 2 Video issued by the Independent Chair of the Inquiry, available [here](#).

13.0 Appendices

Appendix A Final report of the Chair of the Independent Inquiry into Telford CSE

14.0 Report Sign Off

Signed off by	Date sent	Date signed off	Initials
Legal	17/07/2024	17/07/2024	RP
Finance	17/07/2024	17/07/24	MLB

