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10 January 2023

**DRAFT**

Dear Mr Crowther

**Letter to Home Secretary**

The IITCSE report states that the Leader of Telford & Wrekin Council sent a letter dated 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2016 to the Home Secretary (para 1.51). This letter is referred to in the IITCSE report and is enclosed. This letter contains inaccurate and misleading statements and omissions. This is relevant as the Leader of Telford & Wrekin Council is still in post and is responsible for implementing the IITCSE recommendations.

It is apparent that third parties relied on this letter as an accurate statement of fact and that partner agencies agreed to be co-signatories on this basis. This letter had the effect of delaying an inquiry into CSE in Telford for some years.

I set out below details of the inaccurate and misleading statements:

**1 “We have had three inquiries into this issue in 2016.”**

1.1 There had been no inquiries into CSE in Telford.

1.2 There was one Ofsted inspection into Children’s Services which made an overall finding of “Requires Improvement.” This document is enclosed.

1.3 There was one scrutiny review which found that 1/3 of reports of CSE were not acted on.

1.3.1 The letter states that the scrutiny review ‘heard from parents and survivors.’ Parents and survivors who participated were critical of the scrutiny review. See enclosed article.

**2 “We understand that the independent inquiry into child sexual abuse chaired by Professor Alexis Jay will assess the extent to which we have learned lessons.”**

2.1 Correspondence between my office and the Secretary of IICSA, John O’Brien, during October 2016 to February 2017 makes clear this was untrue. IICSA had not made any decision about the geographic areas its inquiry would focus upon at the date of the letter.

2.2 As is referenced in the IITCSE paragraph 1.53, the IICSA had indicated that they would be ‘building upon the body of work on child sexual exploitation following specific instances of CSE in places such as Devon and Cornwall, Oxford, Rochdale, Rotherham, and Telford’. This statement is not an indication that the IICSA would examine what happened in Telford. The Council had no reason to expect that the IICSA would investigate CSE in Telford. In the event none of these geographical areas were the subject of the IICSA’s work.

**3 “Given the recent findings of Ofsted and the fact that the Government’s Independent Inquiry chaired by Alexis Jay, is already committed to looking at what happened here in Telford, we do not feel a further inquiry is necessary.”**

3.1 The finding of the 2016 Ofsted report was ‘Requires Improvement.’ Selective quotes from the 2016 report were used in the letter to suggest Telford & Wrekin Children’s Services were found to be “Good’ by Ofsted.

3.2 ‘Children who need help and protection’, ‘Children looked after and achieving permanence’ and ‘Leadership, management and governance’ were all found to require improvement. Only ‘Adoption performance’ and ‘Experiences and progress of care leavers’ were found to be ‘good.’

3.3 The claim “*The fact that.....Alexis Jay is already committed to looking at what happened in Telford*” was untrue. At and after the time the letter was written John O’Brien, Secretary to IICSA was unable to confirm which geographical areas would be part of the IICSA work on CSE (see letter attached). At no point did Alexis Jay commit to looking at what happened in Telford. At the time of writing the letter, the Council had received no commitments that IICSA would make inquiries into CSE in Telford.

The letter appears to have been a deliberate attempt to prevent scrutiny and it had the effect of materially delaying the Inquiry. To knowingly mislead the Home Secretary and partner agencies is a serious matter and one that is relevant today given that the letter’s author, remains in post as the Council Leader and is responsible for implementing the IITCSE recommendations.

The letter to the Home Secretary was published on the Telford & Wrekin Council website and was therefore intended to be a public document.

Please let me know if you would like to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely,

Lucy Allan  
**Member of Parliament for Telford**