

Lucy Allan MP
Member of Parliament for Telford



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Cllr Lee Carter
Telford & Wrekin Council
Addenbrooke House
Ironmasters Way
Telford TF3 4NT

3 September 2018

Dear Cllr Carter

I am concerned about the proposed delay to appointing a Chair to the CSE inquiry. I understand that you view this as a reasonable extension of time to ensure the inquiry is properly conducted.

It took two years of campaigning by survivors, two years of raising this issue in Parliament and two years of investigative journalism to persuade the Council to agree to an inquiry. The Council's reluctance to commission an inquiry was apparent to all. To anyone not involved in the process, it is quite astonishing that the authorities could imagine that a significant further delay in appointing a Chair, until 2019 at the earliest, could be acceptable in any circumstances.

Everyone understood Cllr Charles Smith's reasonable position that a good period of time should be given to find the right person to chair the inquiry and that this would be done by the end of summer. In the period since this was agreed, there has been no person specification produced, no applications have been invited and no short list of candidates drawn up.

This November, a new CSE case similar to Operation Chalice, will come to court. A group of men are charged with rape, abduction, and sexual activity with and trafficking of children in Telford. These offences were taking place at the very same time as those in authority were resisting an inquiry.

It is welcome that you have involved survivors in the process. This group now consists of two survivors. It is unacceptable to say involving these survivors has caused the delays, or that if these survivors are happy with the delays, then the delays are acceptable. The authorities are responsible to all survivors, their families, and our wider community.

The inquiry is not a piece of political sticking plaster to counter the negative media coverage. It is a valuable opportunity to safeguard and reassure the community. The Council must now as matter of urgency remove obstacles blocking the progress of this inquiry.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lucy Allan', with a large initial 'L' to the left.

Lucy Allan MP