

Home Affairs Committee

Committee Office House of Commons London SW1A 0AA

Tel +44 (0)20 7219 3260 Email homeaffcom@parliament.uk

Website www.parliament.uk/homeaffairscom

From the Acting Committee Chair

Matthew Rycroft CBE
Permanent Secretary
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
SW1P 4DF

14 December 2021

Dear Mr Rycroft

The Undercover Policing Inquiry

I am writing to raise concern about progress on the Undercover Policing Inquiry which was set up in 2015 to “get to the truth about undercover policing across England and Wales since 1968”.

The terms of reference initially anticipated a three-year inquiry with findings published in 2018. When it became clear the Inquiry would not be in position to meet this deadline, a revised timetable was published alongside the Strategic Review in May 2018. On this timetable hearings were intended to begin in June 2019; an interim report published in early summer of 2022; and a final report was anticipated before the end of 2023, with a redacted publication in 2024.

The Inquiry is split into 3 modules. Module 1 looks at the deployment of undercover officers in the past, their conduct and the impact of their activities on themselves and others. Module 2 will examine the management of undercover officers including selection, training, supervision and the legal framework within which undercover policing was carried out. Module 3 is expected to look at the current protocols for undercover policing and make recommendations for the future.

Modules 1 and 2 have then been split into 6 tranches. Tranche 1 (Phase 1) evidence hearings ran from Monday 2 November 2020 to Thursday 19 November 2020. Tranche 1 (Phase 2) evidence hearings ran from 21 April to 14 May 2021, Tranche 1 (Phase 3) evidence hearings are now expected to run in May 2022. The other five tranches of work are significantly further behind or have not been started at all. The total expenditure of the inquiry up to September 2021 is £45,018,900.¹

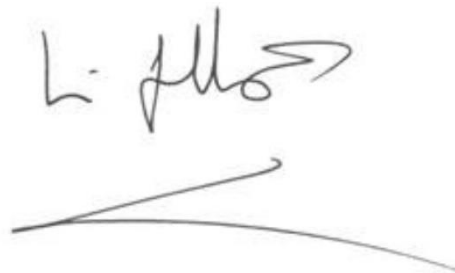
Please provide responses to the following questions by Wednesday 12 January.

1. There are 53 years within scope of the Inquiry. In 6 years of the Inquiry’s operation, there have so far been only 19 days of evidence hearings which cover the period 1968-1982. What do you understand to be the reasons for this apparently slow rate of progress?
2. Why has the Inquiry timeline become so delayed?

¹ Timelines, [The Undercover Policing Inquiry](#) (accessed 10 December 2021)

3. When do you expect the Inquiry will now produce its final report? When do you expect redacted publication of the report will take place?
4. How many people are working on the Undercover Policing Inquiry?
5. What is the Home Office's current forecast for the total cost of the Inquiry?
6. The average annual expenditure for the inquiry to date is £6.9 million. Do you expect that costs will continue to be this high per year for the length of the Inquiry and in what areas of expenditure will those costs be concentrated?
7. Have you as the Accounting Officer had discussions with the Senior Responsible Owner for the inquiry in the Home Office about the risk that delays to the progress of the inquiry may impact on witnesses' availability to give evidence, bearing in mind that witnesses may be asked to testify to events forty to fifty years ago?
8. The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IISCA), for which the Home Office is also a sponsor, publishes an Annual Report with a more granular breakdown of spending categories than the UPI publishes. This includes breakdowns of staffing and legal costs, Chair and panel costs, and more granular spending information on estates, IT, and consultancy/specialist services. Does the UPI provide the Home Office with more detailed spending information along these lines, and will you provide it to the Committee?

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Loughton', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

Tim Loughton MP
Acting Chair of the Home Affairs Committee