

RESTRICTED - CONFIDENTIAL

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Denise Platt

From: Jo Cleary SCR(L)

DRAFT

Date: 18 November 1998

cc: [REDACTED]

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**POLICE CHILD PROTECTION/PAEDOPHILE INVESTIGATION - LONDON BOROUGH OF LAMBETH (OPERATION TRAWLER)**

1. This is to appraise you of the recent media interest and response by LB Lambeth.
2. Current media attention in the Daily Express and Evening Standard

This has concentrated on allegation of sexual abuse of [REDACTED] by a care worker Stephen Forrest whilst he was a resident of Angel Road Children's Home. It is further alleged that Stephen Forrest died of AIDS. [REDACTED] alleges that through third parties he disclosed this abuse to staff of Lambeth Social Services Department in 1992, 1994 and 1996. There may be further media attention which will focus on the young man's [REDACTED] since he left Lambeth care.

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3. At the present time the media has not made the connection between these allegations and Operation Trawler; the criminal investigation of the activities of John Carroll. However the South London press is in receipt of the joint press release by the Council and Metropolitan police, which you have already received.

4. Background

You have received earlier briefing about Operation Trawler. It is through this investigation that the police had contacted ex-residents of Lambeth's Children's Home and these specific allegations have been made. The police investigation continues as detailed in earlier briefings.

5. Action by Lambeth Council:

[REDACTED] and I met with Heather Rabbatts, Chief Executive and Celia Pyke-Lees, the Director of Social Services last night. Both appreciate the high profile and seriousness of these issues. The Chief Executive has taken on the overall leadership of the Council's response. The Council agreed to take the following action:

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- The co-ordination of the Council's involvement with this investigation and management of the consequent tracing of all children and young people will be undertaken by a senior manager external to the Social Services Department. Lambeth acknowledged that their management process to date had not been driven as vigorously as had been discussed with SCR(L).

- An independent inquiry will be established. The Chief Executive has explored a number of options of people available and able to undertake such an inquiry. It would appear that John Barratt: the ex-Chief Executive of Cambridgeshire who led the Trotter inquiry in Hackney is available to undertake the task. It is inevitable that there will be connections made in the media between the two inquiries and initially our view was that this may not be the best option. However, it is understood that John Barratt undertook the complex Trotter inquiry within difficult circumstances and achieved a credible product. Professional support to the inquiry will also be sought and your suggestions on this would be welcomed. Draft terms of reference are attached for your consideration.

- Formal reports will be made to SCR(L) on a minimum of a weekly basis and in advance of any developments or changes in planned action.

**5. Lines To Take**

- Lambeth Council is jointly working with the Metropolitan Police to investigate allegations of Paedophile activity in ex-Lambeth Children's Homes.

- Lambeth Council is establishing an independent inquiry into the allegations of failure to act on disclosures by a young person in their care

- SSI will continue to monitor Council's actions and will be looking for evidence that there are adequate safeguards for children currently looked after by the local authority.

6. SCR(L) will continue to advise you of developments. I am happy to co-ordinate the submission to PS(C) should you wish.

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