

24 July 2019

David Richards
Director of Governance and Ethics
Welsh Government
Cathys Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

By email: David.Richards@gov.wales

Dear Mr Richards

Independent QC Investigation

I write further to your letter of 12 June and my reply of 2 July 2019, the latest exchange in our correspondence since Mr Bowen QC suspended the Investigation on 5 September 2018 pending the outcome of the judicial review in *R (on the application of) Bernadette Sargeant v First Minister Of Wales & Anor.*

Your letter conveyed the First Minister's view that it would be better, in essence, for the Investigation to remain in suspension until he had decided after the Inquest if the Investigation were to continue in a different way or to a different remit. In my reply I said that Mr Bowen QC would be seeking the views of the Sargeant family and the other Core Participants, and he has done so.

Since then the First Minister has issued his written statement of 11 July saying that now the Inquest process has come to an end, it is right that there is a period of reflection. He goes on to say that he will assess what further steps should be taken, in consultation with the Sargeant family and other interested parties, including the future of the Investigation process, in the light of the scope and detail of the Inquest. The First Minister has also published the 'Leak investigation closure minute' (dated 24 January 2018) relating to the November 2017 Cabinet reshuffle, along with his correspondence with Jonathan Jones QC concerning the Operational Protocol for the Investigation and a revised Operational Protocol which remains substantively identical to the previous version.

In the circumstances, Mr Bowen QC has decided to continue the suspension of the Investigation and will be placing a statement to this effect on the Investigation's website. As previously indicated, though, he is acutely aware of the lapse of time since Mr Sargeant's death on 7 November 2017. Whilst he agrees that there should be some time for reflection, he has asked me to convey his desire that decisions are reached on the key questions as soon as reasonably practicable and asks that you set out an indicative timetable for the decision making process.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Salima Budhani', written in a cursive style.

Salima Budhani

Acting Solicitor to the Investigation

cc: Carwyn Jones AM

Neil Hudgell, Hudgells Solicitors