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Deputy Director

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Tel: [REDACTED]  
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*Gists are shown in italics and double underlined*

Further disclosure of 18.10.17 is highlighted

[REDACTED]  
IPCO  
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GCHQ Reference: [REDACTED]

16 October 2017

Dear [REDACTED]

Following the audit visit conducted at GCHQ on 31 August you provided GCHQ with a draft report on 12 September, inviting responses to that draft by close on the 14 September. I appreciate that this very tight deadline derived from the need to meet the timetable laid down by the Investigatory Powers Tribunal ahead of the hearing scheduled for 17-19 October. I am sure you understood that it was therefore not possible to respond substantively within that timeframe, particularly as we too needed to prepare for that hearing, and for Sir John Goldring's Inspection visit that took place from 2-6 October. We therefore focused our attention on the open and closed letters that IPCO was writing to the Tribunal.

We have now had the chance to work through the draft report properly. We have a number of comments to make. We appreciate that the Inspectors needed to conduct the audit visit at much shorter notice than is normal for one of these visits, and that as a result there was less time for them to do any preparatory work, and less time for us to track down all the potentially relevant material. In particular we were unaware that the Inspectors had not had sight of the very extensive paperwork that GCHQ had produced for Sir Stanley Burnton, the then Interception of Communications Commissioner, in June 2016 [REDACTED]

Turning to the specifics of the draft report, we have the following comments, all of which we would be happy to discuss further:

