

suggestion that I knew about and did nothing about allegations at Knowl View is an outright nonsense. Any suggestion I was involved a cover-up is absolutely ridiculous.

"I am appalled that some people are attempting to use the serious abuse at Knowl View as a political football to try and smear me. It is an utter disgrace - they should be concerned about getting justice for the victims.

"After losing a democratic vote by a wide margin, it is incredible that some people are prepared to now sink so low just to try and smear me. I find it sickening and so will the public.

"Although it is 22 years since I was last Leader of the Council, I am sure that allegations surrounding Knowl View made to health and council staff during the seven months towards the end of my leadership were not brought to my attention. I ceased to be the Leader in May 1992.

"I totally support the independent review and I have already indicated this to Neil Garnham QC. The review team has my complete support.

"The review is very important to the Council and Rochdale and the Inquiry should be allowed to get on with its job without interference from politicians.

"Until such time as the Review is finalised I am legally advised that, as Leader of the Council, it would be inappropriate for me to comment further."

An independent inquiry into the role of Rochdale Council is due to report at the end of July.

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