

1 Wednesday, 25 October 2017  
 2 (10.30 am)  
 3 THE CHAIR: Good morning, Mr Altman.  
 4 MR ALTMAN: Good morning, chair. The first witness is  
 5 Mr Joinson, who was mentioned in yesterday's evidence.  
 6 MR PETER JOHN JOINSON (sworn)  
 7 Examination by MR ALTMAN  
 8 MR ALTMAN: Can you give us your full name, please.  
 9 **A. Peter John Joinson.**  
 10 Q. Mr Joinson, I want to ask you, please, a little about  
 11 yourself, if I may. What's your general background, by  
 12 way of occupation?  
 13 **A. I started nursing back in '68 in general nursing and**  
 14 **then moved to Ashworth Hospital, a special hospital. It**  
 15 **was called Moss Side Hospital then. I did my basic**  
 16 **training there. I then moved --**  
 17 Q. Pause there, Mr Joinson. I'm finding it quite difficult  
 18 to hear you. You will see the two microphones. They  
 19 will amplify your voice. Can you sit a little more  
 20 forward, please, and we will have the microphone put  
 21 a little closer so we can all hear you.  
 22 So you starting off in nursing?  
 23 **A. Yes, nursing in a special hospital and then I did**  
 24 **general nursing and then I finally ended my nursing**  
 25 **career as head of learning disabilities in Tameside &**

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1 **Glossop.**  
 2 Q. Were you, in the early '80s, a councillor in the Widnes  
 3 area?  
 4 **A. I was first elected in 1981 as a councillor for what was**  
 5 **then a borough council, Halton Borough Council, which**  
 6 **covers Widnes and Runcorn. I then moved in 1986 to**  
 7 **Tameside and I became a councillor on that from 1987 to**  
 8 **2004 when I lost my seat in an all-out postal ballot.**  
 9 Q. Did you become a councillor thereafter?  
 10 **A. I moved to Middleton, which is part of Rochdale Borough,**  
 11 **in 2008. I became involved again with local**  
 12 **Labour Party politics and was subsequently elected in**  
 13 **2012 to Rochdale Borough.**  
 14 Q. In 2012, did you become, or did you become subsequently,  
 15 the Labour Party Chief Whip?  
 16 **A. That was approximately 2013, probably.**  
 17 Q. So you're back in Rochdale local politics on behalf of  
 18 the Labour Party --  
 19 **A. Yes.**  
 20 Q. -- in 2012, and in 2013 you become the Labour Party  
 21 Chief Whip?  
 22 **A. It's approximately that year, yes.**  
 23 Q. Nobody is looking for a precise date, Mr Joinson. As  
 24 Chief Whip, help us, what was your responsibility?  
 25 **A. To ensure there's proper group discipline, to make sure**

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1 **that the local Labour group itself, which was the**  
 2 **controlling group on the council, didn't do anything,**  
 3 **either as individual members or corporate as a group, to**  
 4 **fetch the council and the Labour Party into disrepute.**  
 5 Q. On 8 June 2014, was your attention drawn to some press  
 6 releases, I think you say -- and I have a statement in  
 7 front of me, you can have it in front of you, it is your  
 8 statement of 31 October 2014.  
 9 **A. Yes.**  
 10 Q. Was your attention drawn to a couple of press releases,  
 11 one from the Manchester Evening News and the other from  
 12 Rochdale Online?  
 13 **A. Correct, yes.**  
 14 Q. I would like us, please, to look, if we may, to see at  
 15 least if you have one, or maybe more than one, of them.  
 16 You will see there is a screen on your right,  
 17 Mr Joinson, GMP000164 at page 2. If we can just bring  
 18 that up, we have looked at it before, and I don't have  
 19 to go through it again, but perhaps we can expand  
 20 the ... we know the date of this is 8 June 2014. Does  
 21 that possibly represent one of the articles you saw?  
 22 This is Rochdale Online.  
 23 **A. One of them, yes, Rochdale Online. I have the other one**  
 24 **here as well from the Evening News.**  
 25 Q. Just hold it up so we can see it, please, Mr Joinson.

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1 Thank you very much.  
 2 Presumably, it covered similar ground to the  
 3 Rochdale Online article?  
 4 **A. It did. Virtually the same story, more or less.**  
 5 Q. Were both of those press releases in relation to  
 6 Councillor Farnell's then recent appointment as leader  
 7 of Rochdale Council and his public claim that when he  
 8 was in post as leader between 1986 and 1992, he was  
 9 unaware of allegations about sexual abuse of Knowl View  
 10 boys?  
 11 **A. That's correct, yes.**  
 12 Q. We know that on 11 June of that same year, so within  
 13 a few days, you had a meeting with him?  
 14 **A. Yes.**  
 15 Q. What was the purpose, or the primary purpose, of that  
 16 meeting?  
 17 **A. I was Labour group Chief Whip, and there had been --**  
 18 Q. Mr Joinson, it is very difficult for me to hear you.  
 19 Can you perhaps, and the usher will help, if need be,  
 20 just bring the microphones a little closer. And I am  
 21 going to ask you just to slow down a bit.  
 22 **A. Okay, thank you.**  
 23 Q. Say that again.  
 24 **A. I was the Labour group Chief Whip and there had been**  
 25 **a change of leadership, but prior to the new leader**

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1 taking control, my job was to send out to all the Labour  
 2 group members the potential group positions which they  
 3 would have wanted for the following municipal year.  
 4 Whilst the leader determines who his Cabinet is and what  
 5 portfolios they have, there was a lot of minor positions  
 6 in various subcommittees and various panels that needed  
 7 to be filled, and I had the documentation for all that  
 8 because I had all the correspondence and the application  
 9 forms from all the members with me, and it was to go  
 10 through that.  
 11 Q. With whom?  
 12 A. With the leader of the council.  
 13 Q. The new leader was Farnell?  
 14 A. Yes. It was a prearranged meeting because, basically,  
 15 I live in Middleton and I have really no need to go to  
 16 Rochdale, to the town hall or the council offices,  
 17 unless there is a specific meeting.  
 18 Q. Let's just remind ourselves. The principal purpose  
 19 behind the meeting with Farnell on 11 June 2014 was to  
 20 go through the various group issues that you had?  
 21 A. Correct, yes.  
 22 Q. Was there another reason that you wanted to see him?  
 23 A. It was as a consequence of the press releases, as the  
 24 Labour group Chief Whip, as I mentioned before, one of  
 25 the areas was to make sure that there's no actions that

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1 fetch either the party or the council into disrepute,  
 2 and I needed to, therefore, just get him to clarify his  
 3 statement for the group records.  
 4 Q. Was that as a result of the press releases that you just  
 5 told us about --  
 6 A. It was, yes.  
 7 Q. -- from a few days earlier?  
 8 A. It was, yes.  
 9 Q. Now, the meeting then took place at the town hall?  
 10 A. No. It was in the council offices.  
 11 Q. The "black box"?  
 12 A. No, that --  
 13 Q. Somewhere else?  
 14 A. It's the new council offices in Riverside.  
 15 Q. Had the "black box" gone by then?  
 16 A. I don't know whether it had gone, but it was certainly  
 17 on its way to go.  
 18 Q. By now, we are 2014 and there are new council offices in  
 19 Rochdale?  
 20 A. Yes.  
 21 Q. How long did the meeting last?  
 22 A. Probably about 20 minutes or so.  
 23 Q. Mr Farnell told us yesterday that, to the extent that  
 24 this was a meeting, you merely popped your head around  
 25 the door?

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1 A. As previously said, I wouldn't pop my head around the  
 2 door because I wouldn't be in Rochdale unless there was  
 3 a prearranged meeting.  
 4 Q. So the effect of his evidence was, you popped your head  
 5 around the door, had a short meeting and that was that?  
 6 A. That's not correct.  
 7 Q. Did you go into his office or any other conference room  
 8 or what?  
 9 A. We sat in his office.  
 10 Q. At a table?  
 11 A. There's a round table there, yes, but I think he was  
 12 probably behind his desk.  
 13 Q. Just remind us, how long do you say this meeting lasted?  
 14 A. Probably about 20 minutes.  
 15 Q. During the course of it, did you make any notes?  
 16 A. Handwritten notes, yes.  
 17 Q. We have a typewritten note. The typewritten note, how  
 18 did that come about?  
 19 A. I actually copied that from my handwritten notes.  
 20 Q. Faithfully? Is it a faithful copy?  
 21 A. Yes, it is.  
 22 Q. In other words, what happened -- what became of your  
 23 handwritten notes?  
 24 A. Unfortunately, the police asked me that question and  
 25 I have had my house upside-down and I can't find them.

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1 Q. If we were to have today your handwritten notes, are you  
 2 saying the typed copy would be a faithful copy of  
 3 the handwritten notes?  
 4 A. Yes. I am, yes.  
 5 Q. Help us with this: the typewritten note, how long after  
 6 the meeting did you type up that note from your  
 7 handwritten note?  
 8 A. Probably the day after.  
 9 Q. What was the purpose of the note? What were you going  
 10 to do with it?  
 11 A. It was for Labour group records, but also really -- as  
 12 a consequence of seeing the press releases and him  
 13 saying he didn't know anything about the allegations of  
 14 sexual abuse, and then him actually offering me the  
 15 evidence that he'd seen a draft report, I was concerned  
 16 that there was an issue that probably the Labour Party  
 17 needed to address.  
 18 Q. We will come to that in a moment. Have you got your  
 19 note in front of you?  
 20 A. Yes, I have, yes.  
 21 Q. I think the chair and panel should still have the note  
 22 from yesterday. Is it headed this way, Mr Joinson -- we  
 23 are just going to go through it together, please. Is it  
 24 headed this way? In bold and underlined:  
 25 "Notes of a meeting with Councillor Richard Farnell.

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1 Leader Rochdale Labour group. 11 June."  
 2 **A. Correct.**  
 3 Q. So that's the heading.  
 4 **A. Mmm-hmm.**  
 5 Q. Does it read as follows:  
 6 "As Chief Whip, I arranged a meeting with the lead  
 7 of the Labour group to go through various group  
 8 positions, et cetera."  
 9 **A. Correct.**  
 10 Q. Which is what you have told us?  
 11 **A. Yes.**  
 12 Q. "At the end of the meeting", so does that indicate that  
 13 at the end of the meeting, literally, this is when you  
 14 raised this other issue?  
 15 **A. Yes. I took the opportunity whilst I was there,**  
 16 **because, as I say, I only went to Rochdale for a very**  
 17 **specific meeting, so rather than have a second meeting**  
 18 **I took the opportunity then.**  
 19 Q. So Mr Farnell wasn't, as it were, aware that this was  
 20 something you were going to raise with him?  
 21 **A. That's correct.**  
 22 Q. "At the end of the meeting" -- this is how the note  
 23 reads -- "I raised with the leader the issues of press  
 24 articles that questioned his knowledge of the Knowl View  
 25 abuse reports. Councillor Farnell indicated that

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1 Councillor Hawton (as chair of Rochdale Health  
 2 Authority) had received a report from her senior officer  
 3 that had been written by a sexual health worker employed  
 4 by the health authority. As a consequence of that  
 5 report, the council was preparing a report. This was  
 6 between approximately March and June 1992.  
 7 Councillor Farnell said he had only seen a draft report  
 8 and the full report wasn't complete until June. By that  
 9 time, he had lost his council seat and ceased to be  
 10 a council leader."  
 11 So far, have I read it correctly, Mr Joinson?  
 12 **A. Correct, yes.**  
 13 Q. When that paragraph begins, "Councillor Farnell  
 14 indicated", are you saying these are the things  
 15 Mr Farnell told you during the course of that meeting?  
 16 **A. Yes.**  
 17 Q. Does the last sentence read:  
 18 "Councillor Farnell stated the full report was  
 19 presented to Councillor Rowen who had taken the  
 20 leadership of the council?"  
 21 **A. That's correct.**  
 22 Q. Then your name appears below with your position, "Labour  
 23 group Chief Whip".  
 24 In a further witness statement that you made to  
 25 Operation Clifton, and I will come back to that in

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1 a moment, on 7 April 2016, in fact -- I rather confused  
 2 myself yesterday when I thought it should have been this  
 3 year; in fact, it is right, it is 2016. Have you got  
 4 that statement in front of you, Mr Joinson?  
 5 **A. Yes, I have.**  
 6 Q. Did the police come back to see you?  
 7 **A. Yes. This was the second interview, yes.**  
 8 Q. The second interview by the police, Operation Clifton  
 9 police. In fact, if you look at the top of the second  
 10 page of your statement, did they in fact come to see you  
 11 on Monday, 4 April 2016 --  
 12 **A. Yes, I have it, yes.**  
 13 Q. -- when an officer by the name of Thompson visited your  
 14 home address and showed you a couple of the press  
 15 articles to which you'd referred below and as a result  
 16 of which you had decided to ask Councillor Farnell about  
 17 during the course of the meeting that you had on  
 18 11 June.  
 19 In this statement, there were a couple more things  
 20 that you added as to what Councillor Farnell had told  
 21 you during the course of your 11 June meeting. I would  
 22 like to ask you about them.  
 23 First of all, at the foot of the page, do you see  
 24 a paragraph that begins:  
 25 "In the press release, Richard Farnell said that he

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1 hadn't seen the report but in his interview with me he  
 2 actually named the sexual health worker as Shepherd and  
 3 that he had seen a draft report prepared for the chair  
 4 of the health authority, which was Pam Hawton, who was  
 5 also a Rochdale councillor."  
 6 **A. Yes.**  
 7 Q. We don't see the name "Shepherd" in your note. When did  
 8 you recall that he had also named the sexual health  
 9 worker who prepared a report as Shepherd? Do you  
 10 remember when that came to you?  
 11 **A. It was -- during the interview -- following my interview**  
 12 **with Richard Farnell, there had also been press reports**  
 13 **with Mr Shepherd's name on, and that's what prompted me**  
 14 **to remember the name.**  
 15 Q. But what you were saying here is that Councillor Farnell  
 16 had actually named him during the course of the meeting  
 17 you had with him. Is that what you are saying?  
 18 **A. Yes, I am, but I didn't record that in the interview**  
 19 **notes.**  
 20 Q. You mean the interview with police first time around,  
 21 I assume?  
 22 **A. And also the interview with Mr Farnell as well.**  
 23 Q. When you came to write up your notes?  
 24 **A. That's correct.**  
 25 Q. Then if you look on the next page, please, you will see

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1 precisely halfway down a paragraph that begins,  
 2 "Richard Farnell did say". Have you got that?  
 3 **A. Yes.**  
 4 Q. "Richard Farnell did say that there were allegations of  
 5 sexual abuse contained in that report. He did not say  
 6 where he had seen it, but I presumed that, as the leader  
 7 of the council then, he would have seen it at his  
 8 office, but he gave no indication as to who may have  
 9 brought it to his attention."  
 10 Were you talking about the draft report that you  
 11 said he had seen?  
 12 **A. Yes.**  
 13 Q. It is a little more detail than was in your original  
 14 typed notes?  
 15 **A. Mmm-hmm.**  
 16 Q. Because here you were saying that you recalled that he  
 17 had also admitted to you that he had seen allegations of  
 18 sexual abuse contained within the draft report he'd  
 19 seen?  
 20 **A. Yes.**  
 21 Q. When did you remember that?  
 22 **A. Following the interview with Mr Farnell -- there's also**  
 23 **when the police officer was going through his**  
 24 **questioning, and obviously my mind went back.**  
 25 Q. During the course of this witness statement -- if you

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1 just go back a page, and it should be page 2 of 5, and  
 2 look at the bottom, it should say "Page 2 of 5"?  
 3 **A. Yes.**  
 4 Q. Do you see that there is the penultimate paragraph which  
 5 reads, "During the course of the interview" -- have you  
 6 got that?  
 7 **A. Yes.**  
 8 Q. "During the course of the interview, Richard Farnell  
 9 gave conflicting accounts."  
 10 What did you mean by that, that he gave conflicting  
 11 accounts?  
 12 **A. The conflicting accounts was the press releases said he**  
 13 **didn't see anything, but obviously he offered the**  
 14 **information that he'd seen the draft report. To me,**  
 15 **that was a conflict.**  
 16 Q. So in light of that conflict, you say:  
 17 "I again spoke to Peter Williams ..."  
 18 Who was Peter Williams?  
 19 **A. Peter Williams at the time was the deputy leader of**  
 20 **the council. He was the next in line.**  
 21 Q. What was your purpose in speaking to the next in line?  
 22 **A. Because I felt there was a conflict there and it needed**  
 23 **to be resolved, because it was -- there was a clear**  
 24 **difference. He was saying to the press he hadn't seen**  
 25 **anything. He had said to me he had. I was concerned**

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1 **because, as a retired nurse, I have a duty of care to**  
 2 **make sure that any allegations of sexual abuse and**  
 3 **people that have been abused are fully investigated and**  
 4 **those who are actually doing the investigation need to**  
 5 **get full knowledge of any issues that could be arising.**  
 6 Q. So in the result, in agreement with Mr Williams, did you  
 7 contact, I think, the regional Labour Party office?  
 8 **A. I did, yes.**  
 9 Q. Because you felt that Richard Farnell should stand down?  
 10 **A. I felt there was a conflict between what was in the**  
 11 **press and the information he had offered to me. There**  
 12 **was a clear difference. So as a consequence, I sought**  
 13 **advice from the regional director of the Labour Party**  
 14 **because I felt, at that level, because he was a council**  
 15 **leader, that the people who should do the investigation**  
 16 **were in fact the people from the regional Labour Party.**  
 17 Q. What happened at the regional Labour Party? Did they  
 18 take it on or not?  
 19 **A. I spoke to the regional director and she referred me to**  
 20 **a further senior officer from the Labour Party within**  
 21 **London. I had a discussion with them. They referred me**  
 22 **back to the regional director. By that time,**  
 23 **Operation Clifton was going on and the comment of**  
 24 **the regional director is, "We'll have to let the police**  
 25 **action take its course".**

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1 Q. So, in effect, although you had done all you could in  
 2 terms of escalating it within the Labour Party, because  
 3 Operation Clifton had started and was moving forwards,  
 4 the advice you were given is, "Let the police  
 5 investigate"?  
 6 **A. That's right, yes.**  
 7 Q. You say in the statement that you had known  
 8 Richard Farnell since the 1990s?  
 9 **A. That's correct.**  
 10 Q. So you'd known him a long time. How did he appear to  
 11 you during the course of the interview on 11 June? Was  
 12 he comfortable or uncomfortable?  
 13 **A. Oh, very comfortable. I think one of the comments**  
 14 **I made to the police when they asked that question,**  
 15 **I'd -- he was very comfortable. Richard is an astute**  
 16 **journalist and a PR person. He knows how to handle the**  
 17 **media and how to handle being in an interview.**  
 18 Q. You also made the comment, and I am going to ask you why  
 19 you made this comment, Mr Joinson, again in your second  
 20 statement, that you would be very surprised if  
 21 Richard Farnell, as leader of the council, was not  
 22 aware, or was not made aware, of what was happening at  
 23 Knowl View. I want to ask you why. If you are looking  
 24 for what you said, it is your penultimate page in your  
 25 second statement, page 4 of 5, right at the bottom.

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1 **A. I have got it, yes.**  
 2 Q. Why do you make that comment?  
 3 **A. I make that comment because, as I say, in the statement,**  
 4 **up to 2004 I had held several senior positions as**  
 5 **a councillor. I was chair of education, and then**  
 6 **I moved on to be the deputy leader. I was responsible**  
 7 **for human resources, finance, and it would have been**  
 8 **common practice for the chief executive or any chief**  
 9 **officer to actually discuss any areas of massive concern**  
 10 **with the appropriate member of council and chair of that**  
 11 **committee. To me, as a chair of education at the time,**  
 12 **if that was part of my portfolio, that would have**  
 13 **automatically gone to the leader of the council.**  
 14 Q. Even in the 1990s?  
 15 **A. Yes.**  
 16 Q. Back to your typewritten note, because we see on it  
 17 "PJ1" with your signature, presumably, and the date  
 18 30 October 2014 and the time. This comes about because,  
 19 as you told us, the police came to see you in due  
 20 course. You had two interviews with them, one  
 21 in October 2014, the other in April 2016. This is your  
 22 exhibit. They obviously asked you to produce these  
 23 notes as an exhibit, and that's why we see your exhibit  
 24 reference PJ1, your signature and the date and time.  
 25 From your perspective, how was it the police were

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1 coming to interview you first of all as part of  
 2 Operation Clifton in October 2014? Did you volunteer  
 3 yourself to them or did they come to you?  
 4 **A. I volunteered to go and speak to the people from**  
 5 **Operation Clifton. They put out a statement to say if**  
 6 **anybody has any evidence whatsoever, then please come**  
 7 **and have a chat with the officers from**  
 8 **Operation Clifton. As I said before, I was concerned**  
 9 **that people had been abused, and I was concerned that if**  
 10 **I hadn't have gone forward, then maybe Operation Clifton**  
 11 **wouldn't have had this particular information.**  
 12 Q. There is some information, Mr Joinson, that  
 13 Colin Lambert also informed Operation Clifton that you  
 14 might have information about Mr Farnell. Now, I don't  
 15 know if you knew that or not. Did you know that?  
 16 **A. I don't recall, but I wouldn't be surprised.**  
 17 Q. Colin Lambert, remind us who he was in relation to the  
 18 goings on perhaps in 2014? Who was he?  
 19 **A. Colin Lambert was the leader of the Labour group. He**  
 20 **took control in 2010 when the previous Conservative and**  
 21 **Liberal coalition collapsed. He took then control of**  
 22 **the council. That was reinforced, but we didn't -- in**  
 23 **subsequent years, when the Labour Party gained more**  
 24 **seats and it was in 2012, I think it was then, towards**  
 25 **the end of 2012, as leader there was the issue about**

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1 **child sexual exploitation going on in Rochdale and it**  
 2 **was Councillor Lambert that actually set up the --**  
 3 **I think it was Mr Garnham's investigation.**  
 4 Q. Colin Lambert was a Labour leader?  
 5 **A. He was, yes.**  
 6 Q. Richard Farnell is a Labour leader. We know that he  
 7 became leader, he told us, in early June 2014?  
 8 **A. That's right.**  
 9 Q. Was there any political infighting between the pair of  
 10 them?  
 11 **A. Oh, yes. I mean, I'm afraid politics is a numbers game.**  
 12 **So Richard wanted to take over the leadership again and**  
 13 **there was lots of jockeying for various positions, but**  
 14 **also Richard had certainly gathered enough votes from**  
 15 **the members of the Labour group to be able to take over**  
 16 **the leadership. I think it was 28:19, so we had a clear**  
 17 **majority.**  
 18 Q. Was Colin Lambert deselected or was he ousted for  
 19 Farnell to take over in 2014? Was that what happened?  
 20 **A. Yes, he was taken out of leadership. Obviously**  
 21 **following the vote within the Labour group,**  
 22 **Councillor Farnell immediately took over leadership and**  
 23 **Colin Lambert withdrew from that.**  
 24 Q. You will know, I'm sure, Mr Joinson, that when I asked  
 25 Farnell about this yesterday, looking at your

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1 handwritten into typewritten note, his evidence to this  
 2 inquiry was that the representations and assertions that  
 3 you wrote in this note, as it were, from his mouth,  
 4 about his knowledge at the time was complete and utter  
 5 invention by you in order to damage him politically  
 6 because you are on Colin Lambert's side, which is how  
 7 I understood him. Do you understand the seriousness of  
 8 the allegations he's making against you?  
 9 **A. I certainly do, yes.**  
 10 Q. Did you invent any of this, Mr Joinson?  
 11 **A. I did not. What is on there is the truth.**  
 12 Q. Which means that Mr Farnell lied to this inquiry  
 13 yesterday?  
 14 **A. I don't like using that word, but I would say he's**  
 15 **probably not telling the truth.**  
 16 MR ALTMAN: Mr Joinson, I think that's all I need to ask  
 17 you. I will see if the chair or the panel have any  
 18 questions for you.  
 19 Questions from THE PANEL  
 20 MS SHARPLING: Thank you, Mr Joinson. Just a couple of  
 21 questions, if I may. The note that you took of  
 22 the meeting with Mr Farnell, was it a note of all the  
 23 things that you discussed, your handwritten note,  
 24 including all those other issues?  
 25 **A. No. I kept them separate. So the latter part where**

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1 **I raised Knowl View, it was totally separate, because**  
2 **the other part of the meeting I already had the papers,**  
3 **so I could write on them.**  
4 MS SHARPLING: I see. When you expressed some concern as  
5 a former nurse and your duty of care when you discovered  
6 the issues raised in your interview with Mr Farnell, did  
7 you take any action yourself to discover what had  
8 happened and whether that duty of care had been  
9 fulfilled by the council?  
10 **A. I raised it through the Labour Party, but looking**  
11 **back -- because I wasn't in Rochdale at the time. It**  
12 **seemed to me that there had been a lack of duty of care,**  
13 **which actually gave me more concern.**  
14 MS SHARPLING: I see. Thank you.  
15 THE CHAIR: No, thank you very much. Thank you, Mr Joinson.  
16 MR ALTMAN: Mr Joinson, I know you have come a long way to  
17 be here for 10.30 am. Thank you very much, indeed.  
18 **A. Thank you.**  
19 **(The witness withdrew)**  
20 MR ALTMAN: Chair, the final live witness is Gail Hopper.  
21 You will remember there is a third part to her evidence  
22 that we propose calling. So I will ask for her to come  
23 back into the room, please. I'm not sure where you have  
24 Gail Hopper's statement, if you want to follow the  
25 evidence, but it should be in the very first divider of

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1 week 1, if my memory serves me.  
2 THE CHAIR: Thank you.  
3 MR ALTMAN: Probably behind letter A. There is another copy  
4 in week 3, I think, at tab 12 as well. I will be  
5 starting, just so you know before she comes in, at  
6 section 13, which is on page 71.  
7 MS GAIL HOPPER (continued)  
8 Examination by MR ALTMAN (continued)  
9 MR ALTMAN: Good morning, Mrs Hopper. I think you are still  
10 on oath or affirmation. I don't think there will be any  
11 requirement to have you resworn or reaffirmed.  
12 The third part of your evidence, for which we are  
13 grateful, Mrs Hopper, is really just to deal with the  
14 investigations you were able to make from records about  
15 certain individuals some of whose names we have heard  
16 during the course of the evidence thus far. I would  
17 like, please, first of all, to ask you to go to your  
18 section 13 to deal with David Higgins, a name that we  
19 have heard, and the circumstances you were asked to  
20 consider in which he left Knowl View and whether the  
21 council was aware of any link between him and  
22 Cyril Smith.  
23 First of all, just to remind us, everything you are  
24 going to tell us comes from documentations held by  
25 Rochdale Council?

Page 22

1 **A. That's correct, yes.**  
2 Q. And has been submitted to the inquiry in relation to the  
3 school, as well as Operation Cleopatra?  
4 **A. Indeed.**  
5 Q. Looking at your 13.2, were you able to discover that  
6 Higgins had been employed as a teacher at Knowl View  
7 between 1 September 1969 and 31 December 1971?  
8 **A. We could, yes, that's correct.**  
9 Q. Were any other records located?  
10 **A. I'm afraid that we were only able to find information**  
11 **about his national insurance number and his last known**  
12 **address, recognising that that was a long time ago, in**  
13 **1971.**  
14 Q. Was the council -- let's deal with this immediately --  
15 able to find any information linking him and  
16 Cyril Smith?  
17 **A. No. No, there was no information to suggest any**  
18 **connection between the two.**  
19 Q. Looking at your 13.6, did council legal services'  
20 records relating to Operation Cleopatra's police  
21 investigation contain some information about Higgins'  
22 conviction as part of Operation Cleopatra?  
23 **A. Yes. Yes, there were records that indicated,**  
24 **in April 2001, the police began investigations into such**  
25 **allegations against Mr Higgins and they linked to Knowl**

Page 23

1 **View School and he was subsequently charged with**  
2 **13 offences.**  
3 Q. They were 13 offences of indecent assault against two  
4 boys --  
5 **A. That's correct.**  
6 Q. -- who had attended the school between 1969 and 1971; is  
7 that right?  
8 **A. Yes, it is.**  
9 Q. As a matter of record, in August of the next year, 2002,  
10 did Higgins plead guilty to 11 offences, with two  
11 offences, presumably he having pleaded not guilty, being  
12 left on the file?  
13 **A. He did, yes.**  
14 Q. In the September of that year, was he sentenced to  
15 12 months' imprisonment?  
16 **A. He was.**  
17 Q. There is no mistake about that: it was 12 months?  
18 **A. Shockingly, yes.**  
19 Q. That's all I need to ask you about him. Can we go,  
20 please, to your section 14 on page 73. You were asked  
21 here to provide any relevant information the council had  
22 about the employment of somebody who has been ciphered  
23 as F34, his conviction and confirmation that his  
24 employment continued thereafter and whether, again, the  
25 council was aware of any link between him and

Page 24

1 Cyril Smith. I think we can get that out of the way  
 2 straight away: there was no link found?  
 3 **A. There was no link, no.**  
 4 Q. If we look at your 14.3, although it has been redacted,  
 5 I think you can confirm -- and if not, you can take it  
 6 from me, Mrs Hopper -- that F34 was employed as  
 7 a teacher at a primary school in Rochdale for a time and  
 8 then as a teacher at Knowl View -- am I right? --  
 9 between 26 April 1976 and 31 December 1988?  
 10 **A. Yes, that's my understanding.**  
 11 Q. No other records were located?  
 12 **A. No, that's correct.**  
 13 Q. Please, looking at your paragraph 14.7, was there some  
 14 information about something that had happened on  
 15 18 March 1977?  
 16 **A. Yes, the incident in the swimming pool.**  
 17 Q. Tell us about that, please.  
 18 **A. A group of young people from Knowl View had been taken**  
 19 **to swimming lessons at the Elizabeth Gaskell Swimming**  
 20 **Pool in Heywood, and there was a group of children from**  
 21 **another primary school from Heywood present at the time.**  
 22 **The children from the primary school had reported that**  
 23 **F34 had indecently exposed himself to them in the foyer**  
 24 **area after the swimming lesson by moving the zip on his**  
 25 **trousers up and down several times, exposing his penis.**

Page 25

1 **The children who witnessed the incident were 11 years**  
 2 **old at the time.**  
 3 Q. I think it was reported to the bath superintendent, who,  
 4 according to the information you have, disregarded the  
 5 allegation?  
 6 **A. It was, but fortunately their head teacher didn't.**  
 7 Q. She spoke to the children concerned. She then contacted  
 8 the head teacher at Knowl View, who was Mr Hopwood at  
 9 the time?  
 10 **A. It was.**  
 11 Q. That was followed up by her with a written report of  
 12 the incident?  
 13 **A. Yes, that's right.**  
 14 Q. Does it appear that Mr Hopwood interviewed F34, and F34  
 15 denied the allegations?  
 16 **A. Yes. Yes, that's correct.**  
 17 Q. The chief adviser at the time was Cliff Bentley, and he  
 18 was contacted on the same day as the incident, when  
 19 a meeting took place with the chief education adviser at  
 20 the time, Alan Naylor. We have often heard him referred  
 21 to as Neville Naylor. Is that the same person?  
 22 **A. It is the same person, yes.**  
 23 Q. As well as a solicitor from the secretaries' department  
 24 on the basis it was thought an offence might have been  
 25 committed. Can you confirm it was decided at the

Page 26

1 meeting that the chief executive would be consulted and  
 2 F34 would be suspended from duty and the matter reported  
 3 to the police?  
 4 **A. That's correct. But our statement was actually**  
 5 **inaccurate in relation to the date. As we have gathered**  
 6 **more information, it was clear that the meeting took**  
 7 **place on 21 March and not on the 18th, as we say in our**  
 8 **statement.**  
 9 Q. Thank you for that correction. But you confirm in your  
 10 paragraph 14.10 that it was on that date,  
 11 21 March 1977 --  
 12 **A. Yes.**  
 13 Q. -- that he was suspended from duty?  
 14 **A. He was.**  
 15 Q. The matter was referred to a Mr Hartley at  
 16 Rochdale Police?  
 17 **A. Yes.**  
 18 Q. Who interviewed the chief education adviser the next  
 19 day?  
 20 **A. Yes, that's correct.**  
 21 Q. Important people were notified of the action that was  
 22 taken?  
 23 **A. Yes.**  
 24 Q. And it appears that the parents of the children  
 25 concerned were to be notified?

Page 27

1 **A. That's right.**  
 2 Q. What about the police investigation? Are you able to  
 3 tell us what, if anything, happened about that?  
 4 **A. Yes. The police investigation did take place, that**  
 5 **resulted in a court attendance and F34 was initially**  
 6 **convicted at Heywood Magistrates' Court for indecent**  
 7 **exposure to two 11-year-old girls and fined £50.**  
 8 Q. You have discovered, or recovered, a letter dated  
 9 7 July 1977. I am going to ask for it to be put up on  
 10 screen. It is RHC002770. It is regarding F34's  
 11 suspension?  
 12 **A. That's right.**  
 13 Q. I think this is the letter. If we can expand the top  
 14 half and then the second:  
 15 "Dear Mr Stanley [who appears to have been the chair  
 16 of the Education Committee at the time].  
 17 "We, the undersigned members of staff at Knowl View  
 18 School, wish to express the following points in  
 19 reference to the suspension of F34 and the unfortunate  
 20 decision made by the magistrates at the court hearing in  
 21 Heywood on 6 July:  
 22 "1. We unanimously and implicitly believe in his  
 23 innocence.  
 24 "2. We acknowledge that since his appointment he  
 25 has proven to be a totally acceptable member of

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1 a dedicated team.  
 2 "3. We believe him to be industrious, meticulous  
 3 and responsible and most effective in both classwork and  
 4 extraneous duties.  
 5 "4. His influence on boys is both beneficial and  
 6 therapeutic, being based upon sound qualities of  
 7 patience and tolerance.  
 8 "5. His standards of behaviour, self-discipline and  
 9 professional attitude are undoubtedly based upon sound  
 10 Christian principles and morals.  
 11 "In stressing these points we implore that the  
 12 education authority, the governors to the school and  
 13 yourself express a leniency and high level of  
 14 sympathetic appreciation of not only our faith in F34  
 15 but in recognition of his services and importance to our  
 16 developing unit.  
 17 "We feel it significant to note that senior staff  
 18 present at the hearing felt there had been a miscarriage  
 19 of justice. These feelings were imparted from impartial  
 20 personnel present, including a police inspector who even  
 21 felt that on the basis of evidence presented the case  
 22 should not have gone to court.  
 23 "Knowl View School has had more than its share of  
 24 unsettling experiences in recent years."  
 25 Pausing there, what were the authors talking about,

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1 do you know? What were the "unsettling experiences"?"  
 2 **A. I'm not clear about the "unsettling experiences", given**  
 3 **the date of 1977.**  
 4 Q. "At a time when we are making progress to attaining our  
 5 true potential, we feel that we are not in a position to  
 6 carry more setback. But Knowl View School apart, our  
 7 sympathies and concern lie wholeheartedly with F34, his  
 8 professional status, his wife and child. The alleged  
 9 offence has already created more upset than is merited.  
 10 "Our letter is not emotional but sincere in  
 11 acknowledging not only support for a fellow member of  
 12 staff but also in attaining our true potential. We  
 13 believe firmly that F34 should be instrumental in being  
 14 a part of our developing establishment."  
 15 We can see, although the signatures have been  
 16 labelled with redactions, there were several of them?  
 17 **A. That's correct.**  
 18 Q. Was there any information as to whether F34 appealed the  
 19 conviction?  
 20 **A. There was. We received a letter just in September of**  
 21 **this year since our statement was prepared, and that**  
 22 **came from DAC Beachcroft on 19 September.**  
 23 Q. They are a firm of solicitors?  
 24 **A. They are a firm of solicitors that deal with claims from**  
 25 **previous residents. They had interviewed F34 on**

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1 **15 December 2016, and he confirmed for certain that he**  
 2 **had appealed. We understood that that might have been**  
 3 **the case, but confirmed that the appeal was successful**  
 4 **and the conviction was overturned and he was therefore**  
 5 **reinstated, he said following three months' suspension,**  
 6 **but we believe it was probably longer than that.**  
 7 Q. So his suspension, however long it was, remained in  
 8 force pending the outcome of the appeal?  
 9 **A. We believe it was five or six months, and there's**  
 10 **certainly correspondence to indicate, in response to**  
 11 **that letter from the members of staff, that no action**  
 12 **would be taken until the appeal was complete.**  
 13 Q. But the appeal was complete, he was successful and he  
 14 was reinstated?  
 15 **A. And that seems to be the reason for the reinstatement,**  
 16 **yes.**  
 17 Q. I think you found, looking at your paragraphs 14.20 to  
 18 14.22, from records, that it looks as if he resumed his  
 19 duties between 1978 and, what, 1988 or thereabouts?  
 20 **A. Certainly he would -- there are records that suggest he**  
 21 **was working throughout that period, yes.**  
 22 Q. Finally leaving the school on 31 December 1988, I think?  
 23 **A. Yes. Yes, that's correct.**  
 24 Q. That's your paragraph 14.22. Thank you very much.  
 25 Now your section 15. You were asked to consider any

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1 relevant information which the council had about any  
 2 other employee at Knowl View against whom an allegation  
 3 of sexual abuse had been made. I am going to summarise  
 4 this in this way, rather than go through all of  
 5 the paragraphs, but if you would look, for example, at  
 6 15.6, you deal there with somebody ciphered as F52. Was  
 7 this an assistant teacher who resigned due to alcohol  
 8 problems?  
 9 **A. It was, yes.**  
 10 Q. If we then move on, please, to the next page, your  
 11 paragraph 15.15, another person ciphered as F76.  
 12 **A. Yes.**  
 13 Q. In relation to this person, had there been an allegation  
 14 in a civil claim of inappropriate touching of a core  
 15 participant complainant in this inquiry, A6?  
 16 **A. There had, but there were no records to suggest that**  
 17 **there'd been any discipline.**  
 18 Q. F33, your paragraph 15.19. As regards that ciphered  
 19 individual, there was an allegation that he had an  
 20 unprofessional relationship with a boy and his mother.  
 21 Was the allegation determined as unfounded by the head  
 22 teacher?  
 23 **A. It was.**  
 24 Q. Then finally, on your page 79, paragraph 15.26, as  
 25 regards an individual ciphered as F35, I think you'd

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1 been even unable to establish that person's employment,  
 2 but I think you found a letter from October 1988  
 3 alleging that a 41-year-old patient at a hospital had  
 4 alleged that F35 had been physically -- forgive me, from  
 5 the patient had alleged that he, the patient, had been  
 6 physically and sexually abused by F35 and another pupil,  
 7 B467, when the patient was at Knowl View between the  
 8 years 1969 and 1974?  
 9 **A. That's correct. The letter was received, but there was**  
 10 **no information to suggest any employment or discipline.**  
 11 Q. Is it right that there were no other allegations against  
 12 any of those individuals of child sexual abuse while at  
 13 Knowl View?  
 14 **A. There weren't.**  
 15 Q. Which brings us, please, to section 18 on page 97. This  
 16 is the final section from your report that I am going to  
 17 be asking you about, beginning at 18.5. This section  
 18 was all about what Rochdale Council knew about the  
 19 sexual abuse of children at other residential  
 20 institutions in Rochdale within the same timeframe as  
 21 Knowl View was operational?  
 22 **A. Yes.**  
 23 Q. So we are focusing on other institutions?  
 24 **A. Yes, that's correct.**  
 25 Q. The first individual is ciphered as F100.

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1 **A. Yes.**  
 2 Q. But we are able to name him. His name was Thomas Mann.  
 3 At your paragraph 18.7 and onwards, can you confirm that  
 4 he was appointed as the deputy officer in charge of  
 5 a children's home in Rochdale known as Foxholes?  
 6 **A. He was.**  
 7 Q. That was in 1979?  
 8 **A. That's correct.**  
 9 Q. Did he remain in post until 1983, when he was dismissed  
 10 for gross misconduct?  
 11 **A. Indeed. That's correct.**  
 12 Q. Just summarising the effect of this without going  
 13 through every paragraph and detail, was the allegation  
 14 against him by a 14-year-old child who alleged that Mann  
 15 had sexually abused her?  
 16 **A. It was, yes.**  
 17 Q. Can you confirm, looking at your paragraph 18.11, that  
 18 on 14 December 1983, Mann appeared at Rochdale  
 19 Magistrates' Court, where he pleaded guilty to two  
 20 offences occurring between 4 October and 4 December 1983  
 21 of indecent assault on a girl under 16?  
 22 **A. He did.**  
 23 Q. For which he was conditionally discharged for two years?  
 24 **A. He was.**  
 25 Q. Was he summarily dismissed in the result?

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1 **A. He was, that's correct.**  
 2 Q. I think he later appealed against his dismissal but that  
 3 appeal was later withdrawn?  
 4 **A. Yes.**  
 5 Q. Thank you. Now a little more complicated is the case of  
 6 Dennis Leckey, on your page 99. I am going to focus  
 7 first of all on your paragraph 18.23. The information  
 8 that you have been able to provide the inquiry about him  
 9 was sourced from the disciplinary file, internal report  
 10 and records contained within a number of boxes relating  
 11 to Knowl View --  
 12 **A. Yes. Yes.**  
 13 Q. -- which was slightly surprising because he had never  
 14 been a member of staff there?  
 15 **A. That's correct.**  
 16 Q. Although you say he had had some dealings with pupils  
 17 who had resided at Knowl View?  
 18 **A. That is our understanding.**  
 19 Q. Can I go immediately, please, to 18.32. I am going to  
 20 summarise the intervening paragraphs in this way, that  
 21 there had been some disciplinary problems with Leckey in  
 22 that he had criticised the school at which he was based  
 23 and he'd made that criticism publicly in a newspaper; is  
 24 that correct?  
 25 **A. He did.**

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1 Q. Because of it, was he, on 30 November 1992 -- so that's  
 2 the period of time we are looking at -- moved from his  
 3 position as a Senior Education Welfare Officer to  
 4 a vacant post of Education Welfare Officer, and that was  
 5 at his own request?  
 6 **A. That's correct.**  
 7 Q. Now, your paragraph 18.35, please, on page 101. You  
 8 say, "Following his return to work ..."  
 9 Had he moved away from work in the period up to  
 10 which we are about to deal?  
 11 **A. I think he must have been, because I didn't see any**  
 12 **evidence of a suspension for the earlier matter, but**  
 13 **he'd clearly not been in work.**  
 14 Q. It looked like he'd been potentially demoted from  
 15 a Senior Education Welfare Officer to --  
 16 **A. He had.**  
 17 Q. He'd moved on?  
 18 **A. Yes.**  
 19 Q. It looks like there is a slightly mysterious period,  
 20 perhaps, when he wasn't working, but you say, following  
 21 his return to work, Leckey began working with a pupil  
 22 whom we are ciphering as A36, who attended a particular  
 23 school, and you say:  
 24 "The first reference within the records to that was  
 25 a draft letter of 22 November 1993 from Leckey arranging

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1 a meeting to discuss that particular child."  
 2 So the information you had was that he was working  
 3 with a boy, and that boy, summarising the position, and  
 4 let's see if I have understood this correctly,  
 5 Mrs Hopper, A36, was to make allegations against Leckey  
 6 in October 1995, when the boy was then aged 17, that  
 7 Leckey had committed an act of gross indecency on him  
 8 when he, the boy, was staying overnight with Leckey at  
 9 his home when he awoke to find Leckey performing oral  
 10 sex on him?  
 11 **A. That's correct.**  
 12 Q. That was the nature of the allegation which emerged  
 13 later?  
 14 **A. Yes.**  
 15 Q. You say that Leckey began working with --  
 16 **A. I'm sorry, can I just interrupt there?**  
 17 Q. Yes, please.  
 18 **A. I don't think it emerged later. I think it emerged at**  
 19 **the time, that information, because that's what was**  
 20 **investigated in November 1995.**  
 21 Q. Maybe it is my question.  
 22 **A. Okay.**  
 23 Q. I don't mean it quite that way. Did the boy make the  
 24 allegation against Leckey after he had left school?  
 25 That's the point.

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1 **A. He did, yes. Yes, he did.**  
 2 Q. That's what I'm driving at.  
 3 **A. Because the allegation came through in 1995.**  
 4 Q. That's what I'm saying.  
 5 **A. Sorry.**  
 6 Q. Don't worry. It came afterwards, once he'd left school?  
 7 **A. Yes.**  
 8 Q. And actually he was in aftercare, because he'd been in  
 9 care --  
 10 **A. Yes, he was.**  
 11 Q. -- but he was in aftercare?  
 12 **A. Yes.**  
 13 Q. You say that Leckey had worked with the pupil. Do you  
 14 know offhand whether it was in fact the case that Leckey  
 15 hadn't so much worked with the boy but had worked at the  
 16 school where the boy had been?  
 17 **A. My reading of it was that he was working at the school**  
 18 **because -- I think it is difficult to follow some of it**  
 19 **and I have read the Leckey papers through in some**  
 20 **detail, but he was certainly working at the school and**  
 21 **had formed a relationship with him.**  
 22 Q. It perhaps doesn't matter overly much how it came about,  
 23 but that's the nub of it, that he had formed  
 24 a relationship, an inappropriate relationship, with this  
 25 boy.

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1 Can you confirm as a result of the boy's complaint  
 2 in October 1995 that the police were informed, and it  
 3 looks like initially A36 did make a complaint to them  
 4 alleging gross indecency. Is that your understanding?  
 5 **A. I believe that the boy made a complaint but was not**  
 6 **willing to make a formal complaint to the police.**  
 7 Q. Absolutely. You are right.  
 8 **A. Yes.**  
 9 Q. So he complained to the police but didn't, as it were,  
 10 follow it up?  
 11 **A. He was willing to tell them what happened but he didn't**  
 12 **want to formalise --**  
 13 Q. Formalise the process perhaps by making a witness  
 14 statement?  
 15 **A. That's right.**  
 16 Q. Or supporting a prosecution at that point?  
 17 **A. Yes.**  
 18 Q. As for Leckey, and this is your 18.38, he was  
 19 interviewed the following month, in November 1995,  
 20 denying the allegations but admitting the friendship; is  
 21 that correct?  
 22 **A. Yes.**  
 23 Q. There then followed strategy meetings?  
 24 **A. Yes.**  
 25 Q. And in your paragraph 18.39, a second strategy meeting,

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1 taking place at the end of November 1995, at which the  
 2 police said that they were unable to take any further  
 3 action without A36's consent?  
 4 **A. Yes.**  
 5 Q. So the police were present at a strategy meeting and  
 6 they said that, in effect, there was nothing they could  
 7 do to progress a prosecution without A36's consent to  
 8 it?  
 9 **A. Indeed.**  
 10 Q. Effectively. So what was agreed at the meeting was the  
 11 matter to be dealt with as an allegation of  
 12 unprofessional behaviour?  
 13 **A. Yes.**  
 14 Q. And that the Education Department would carry out  
 15 a formal investigation under Rochdale Council's  
 16 procedures; is that correct?  
 17 **A. Yes.**  
 18 Q. At your paragraph 18.40 at the top of page 102, you set  
 19 out what Leckey's account was, and was this an account  
 20 he gave during the course of the investigation?  
 21 **A. The investigation, yes.**  
 22 Q. His account was he had befriended the boy in the summer  
 23 of 1995 after he had left the school, and he said he had  
 24 had very little contact when the boy was a pupil between  
 25 1993 and 1995, and that they'd had no contact outside

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1 the school?  
 2 **A. Yes.**  
 3 Q. That was his account?  
 4 **A. Yes.**  
 5 Q. But did you discover that the investigation revealed  
 6 other evidence showing his claims to be totally untrue?  
 7 **A. Absolutely.**  
 8 Q. Did the report from that investigation recommend  
 9 a disciplinary hearing into the allegation of  
 10 unprofessional behaviour constituting misconduct and  
 11 action short of dismissal if it was found to be proved?  
 12 **A. Yes.**  
 13 Q. So even if he had been found guilty within the  
 14 parameters of the process that was being discussed, it  
 15 was already determined that the sentence should be  
 16 something short of dismissal?  
 17 **A. Surprisingly so, yes.**  
 18 Q. In the meantime, he remained in post as an Education  
 19 Welfare Officer; is that right?  
 20 **A. He did.**  
 21 Q. You make these important observations, and they appear  
 22 in your paragraph 18.41, because I am going to follow  
 23 this through: did it appear from what you had seen that  
 24 the boy's age, the complainant's age, his reluctance to  
 25 make a formal complaint to the police and the fact that

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1 he was no longer, as you put it, a service user -- in  
 2 other words, what does that mean, no longer in care?  
 3 **A. Well, he wasn't any longer receiving services from the**  
 4 **Education Welfare Service.**  
 5 Q. So all of that led to the view that that had been  
 6 a consensual relationship?  
 7 **A. Yes.**  
 8 Q. Who took that view?  
 9 **A. My assessment is that the people who were carrying out**  
 10 **the investigation took that view.**  
 11 Q. What you then say is this: the investigation focused on  
 12 whether developing a friendship was inappropriate in  
 13 isolation from the sexual assault rather than as part of  
 14 a grooming process?  
 15 **A. Yes.**  
 16 Q. I am going to come to another aspect of that because  
 17 there was a further report which touched on those  
 18 aspects, and I will deal with that towards the end?  
 19 **A. It was as if in the absence of a complaint to the police**  
 20 **by the young person that the sexual abuse, which is what**  
 21 **it was, hadn't happened.**  
 22 Q. It was almost as if the failure by police -- I don't  
 23 mean it in any critical way, because in one sense they  
 24 felt there was nothing they could do without the boy's  
 25 support. But the failure by police to be able to launch

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1 a proper investigation or prosecution perhaps at that  
 2 point without his support rather determined the outcome  
 3 so far as the Education Department was concerned?  
 4 **A. What appeared to be missed was that the young person had**  
 5 **told other professionals that he had been sexually**  
 6 **abused by a professional person. Despite that not going**  
 7 **down a criminal route, that hadn't remained the focus.**  
 8 Q. So the focus shifted and the most serious part of it was  
 9 totally ignored?  
 10 **A. Absolutely. Whether or not it went through the criminal**  
 11 **route, he had told people that. He had been really**  
 12 **clear about it. And that seemed to have been forgotten.**  
 13 Q. Did it appear to you -- of course, the benefit of  
 14 hindsight is always a wonderful thing -- that it was  
 15 almost a convenience to ignore it?  
 16 **A. I don't know. I don't think I can say it was**  
 17 **a convenience. It was a long time ago, but it was 1995.**  
 18 **It was four years after the Pindown Inquiry, there were**  
 19 **a lot of things happening nationally, it followed**  
 20 **North Wales. There was information and learning around**  
 21 **that I was shocked by that approach.**  
 22 Q. In a sense, it had a knock-on, because, as you point out  
 23 in your paragraph 18.43, Leckey maintained his  
 24 relationship with the boy?  
 25 **A. He did.**

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1 Q. In July 1996, and this is your paragraph 18.48, the  
 2 formal disciplinary hearing, the one that we have been  
 3 talking about, regarding Leckey was heard by Dr Hodge --  
 4 **A. It was.**  
 5 Q. -- whom this inquiry has heard from. The allegations  
 6 put to Leckey were: one, that he had failed to follow  
 7 accepted reporting, logging and "Working Together"  
 8 procedures in relation to his contact with the boy; and,  
 9 second, that he'd befriended him, in inverted commas,  
 10 whilst a pupil and subsequently concealed his friendship  
 11 from colleagues, line managers and from A36's carers;  
 12 and, third, by his actions in developing and continuing  
 13 a relationship with A36, Leckey put himself and the  
 14 service at risk of complaint and did not act in A36's  
 15 interests; four, and finally, this behaviour is  
 16 inappropriate to, and in conflict with, the role of an  
 17 Education Welfare Officer, for which Leckey is employed,  
 18 and, as such, constitutes unprofessional behaviour.  
 19 Those were the findings.  
 20 **A. They were.**  
 21 Q. The result, the outcome, at 18.49, was all four parts of  
 22 the management case, as it was called, being proven that  
 23 a first and final warning should be issued to him?  
 24 **A. Yes.**  
 25 Q. So that was the result, that was the outcome?

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1 **A. It was.**  
 2 Q. But the twist is that on 8 July 1996, so the very same  
 3 day, if the date is accurate, that the disciplinary  
 4 finding was made, A36's aftercare worker visited him at  
 5 home. A36 reported that he was having nightmares and  
 6 flashbacks about "being raped by that man"?  
 7 **A. That's right.**  
 8 Q. And wanted then to report the matter to the police?  
 9 **A. Yes.**  
 10 Q. As a result of which he did, on the same day, and  
 11 arrangements were made to take a statement from him two  
 12 days later?  
 13 **A. Yes, that's correct.**  
 14 Q. As far as you can tell, and maybe you won't know, was it  
 15 pure coincidence that on the same day A36 decided to  
 16 report the matter formally or was it just a matter of  
 17 coincidence?  
 18 **A. I don't know. I don't know. I wondered whether he had**  
 19 **been told the outcome of the investigation. That's**  
 20 **unlikely. I just don't know.**  
 21 Q. You note that on 11 July, so the day after arrangements  
 22 had been made to take a statement from A36, a letter  
 23 with a first and final warning following the  
 24 disciplinary hearing was sent to Leckey from Dr Hodge.  
 25 The letter said that the warning would remain in force

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1 for 12 months, would then be removed from his record  
 2 providing there were no further breaches of discipline  
 3 during that 12-month period. Did Leckey, on 24 July,  
 4 decide to appeal?  
 5 **A. He did.**  
 6 Q. To appeal the outcome and also that he wished to discuss  
 7 grievance proceedings with his union representative.  
 8 But on 25 July, he was arrested by the police and  
 9 charged with sexual offences against children. Did you  
 10 find a handwritten note dated the same date that records  
 11 the fact that Leckey was charged with offences not only  
 12 against A36, but also two other families from Tameside  
 13 where he had worked some 10 to 15 years previously?  
 14 **A. That's correct, and we have no idea how those came to be**  
 15 **connected at the same time.**  
 16 Q. But it looks as if, given one has to assume that A36  
 17 made a formal witness statement to the police on  
 18 10 July, and here we are just two weeks later, it rather  
 19 suggests that the police had an investigation already  
 20 ongoing in relation to the Tameside children?  
 21 **A. That would appear to be the case.**  
 22 Q. And the police simply linked the two?  
 23 **A. That's right.**  
 24 Q. So at that point Leckey was charged and the note you  
 25 have recovered says that there was every indication that

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1 Leckey continued to engage in activities with children?  
 2 **A. Yes.**  
 3 Q. On the same day, did Adele Bebb -- what was Adele Bebb's  
 4 position at that time?  
 5 **A. She was an assistant director and she had**  
 6 **a responsibility for personnel and employment.**  
 7 Q. Did she write to Leckey instructing him to report to the  
 8 Director of Education and not to go to his place of  
 9 work?  
 10 **A. She did.**  
 11 Q. Or any other educational establishment or council  
 12 building?  
 13 **A. Yes.**  
 14 Q. On the next day, was he suspended from duty?  
 15 **A. He was.**  
 16 Q. Then there followed a strategy meeting, on 31 July, with  
 17 representatives of police, education and social services  
 18 present?  
 19 **A. Yes.**  
 20 Q. Were the charges against Leckey confirmed as 13 offences  
 21 of buggery, indecent assault, as well as taking indecent  
 22 photographs?  
 23 **A. Yes.**  
 24 Q. One of those offences related to A36 and the others  
 25 related to complainants from the Tameside area who had

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1 come forward to Cheshire Police during a separate  
 2 operation investigating complaints from children in  
 3 care. So it looks very much as if there was a separate  
 4 operation ongoing which must have been ongoing for some  
 5 time?  
 6 **A. Yes.**  
 7 Q. As a result of which the council had set up a hotline  
 8 for any concerned parents and received a number of  
 9 calls.  
 10 Action was drawn up. There was going to be a second  
 11 strategy meeting in September. Did a memo from  
 12 Adele Bebb to Mr Lawley, who was then the Borough  
 13 Solicitor and the town clerk, I suspect, provide him  
 14 with an update on the situation concerning Leckey and  
 15 did the memo note among other things that the situation  
 16 was "potentially acutely embarrassing" for the council  
 17 and the information available indicated that Leckey had  
 18 been committing those offences for some 20-plus years,  
 19 with the police having recovered material from his home  
 20 or his house which was extremely disturbing and  
 21 indicated planned, systematic abuse and a warped  
 22 personality. I think some of that material was diaries  
 23 containing sexual fantasies against children?  
 24 **A. That's my understanding too, yes.**  
 25 Q. There was a second strategy meeting in

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<p>1 early September -- your paragraph 18.62; is that right?</p> <p>2 <b>A. Yes, there was.</b></p> <p>3 Q. It was noted that some of the actions had been completed</p> <p>4 but not all of the children named had been interviewed,</p> <p>5 but the investigation -- presumably that was the</p> <p>6 internal Rochdale investigation -- continued?</p> <p>7 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>8 Q. Insofar as Leckey goes and the criminal process, did he</p> <p>9 appear at Tameside Magistrates' Court on</p> <p>10 19 September 1996?</p> <p>11 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>12 Q. The chief personnel officer, a Mark Creighton, attended</p> <p>13 the hearing and noted in a memo dated 26 September that</p> <p>14 a number of new charges had been added, now totalling</p> <p>15 19 counts?</p> <p>16 <b>A. That's correct, yes.</b></p> <p>17 Q. A third strategy meeting was held on 14 October when it</p> <p>18 was noted that the charges had increased to 19 relating</p> <p>19 to indecent assault and buggery of boys ranging between</p> <p>20 10 and 16 years of age, alleged to have occurred between</p> <p>21 1971 and 1995 in the Tameside and Stockport area?</p> <p>22 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>23 Q. There was a fourth strategy meeting in November, noting</p> <p>24 that interviews with named children were ongoing and it</p> <p>25 could be difficult for the Education Department to</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 49</p>	<p>1 the investigation, in other words, your investigation,</p> <p>2 regarding Leckey and did Linda Richardson, a child</p> <p>3 protection development officer at Lancashire County</p> <p>4 Council, was she instructed to carry out that review and</p> <p>5 to report?</p> <p>6 <b>A. She did, yes.</b></p> <p>7 Q. What you say in your report is:</p> <p>8 "On 6 September 1998, Ms Richardson sent her final</p> <p>9 inquiry report to the then Director of Education at</p> <p>10 Rochdale who was Brian Atkinson."</p> <p>11 <b>A. Yes, that's correct.</b></p> <p>12 Q. We have the report and I wonder if we might put it up on</p> <p>13 the screen. First of all, RHC000939. This is probably</p> <p>14 not the -- well, it is page 1, but there may have been</p> <p>15 a title page which we don't appear to have. But is this</p> <p>16 the report, by looking at the contents?</p> <p>17 <b>A. It is.</b></p> <p>18 Q. You summarise the matters in your paragraph 18.74 and</p> <p>19 18.75. We will perhaps come back to that -- in fact, we</p> <p>20 certainly will.</p> <p>21 Can we just look at a couple of paragraphs, please,</p> <p>22 in the report. Do you know what the date of the report</p> <p>23 was?</p> <p>24 <b>A. It was submitted on 6 September 1998. It was surprising</b></p> <p>25 <b>that it took almost a year to produce.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 51</p>
<p>1 proceed with the disciplinary hearing at that stage due</p> <p>2 to the risk of prejudicing the criminal trial, but it</p> <p>3 was resolved, by the look of it, that his instant</p> <p>4 dismissal would occur if he was prosecuted?</p> <p>5 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>6 Q. There were further strategy meetings into the next year,</p> <p>7 1997. On 1 September 1997, did his criminal trial begin</p> <p>8 at Manchester Crown Court?</p> <p>9 <b>A. It did.</b></p> <p>10 Q. It looks as if he contested the allegations?</p> <p>11 <b>A. It was a lengthy trial, yes.</b></p> <p>12 Q. He was found guilty on 10 September and then sentenced</p> <p>13 to 18 years' imprisonment for those offences?</p> <p>14 <b>A. Not before time.</b></p> <p>15 Q. Attracting, understandably, a great deal of local and</p> <p>16 national publicity?</p> <p>17 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>18 Q. As night followed day, on 12 September, was Leckey</p> <p>19 formally dismissed by Rochdale Council?</p> <p>20 <b>A. He was.</b></p> <p>21 Q. On 10 October of that year, at the foot of your</p> <p>22 page 105, there was a debrief meeting internally held to</p> <p>23 discuss the investigation and identify lessons learned</p> <p>24 for the future. At the top of page 106, was it decided</p> <p>25 to commission an external review into the handling of</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 50</p>	<p>1 Q. We have seen a reference to a date of 11 November 1997.</p> <p>2 Would that be right or wrong, do you think?</p> <p>3 <b>A. Well, it was October 1997 that it was commissioned.</b></p> <p>4 Q. So it can't be --</p> <p>5 <b>A. So it seems unlikely. But it did seem to take an</b></p> <p>6 <b>inordinate length of time to complete.</b></p> <p>7 Q. Can we go, then, please, to page 25. There you will see</p> <p>8 a header "Case management". Can we read together just</p> <p>9 those first two paragraphs, 7.6.1, and perhaps magnify</p> <p>10 them, if you would:</p> <p>11 "The focus of the earlier strategy meetings centred</p> <p>12 upon the need to plan a course of action in relation to</p> <p>13 the investigation. Upon learning that A36 did not wish</p> <p>14 to make a formal complaint against DL [Leckey], the</p> <p>15 strategy meeting considered that that disciplinary</p> <p>16 action would be necessary even given that:</p> <p>17 "-- alleged incident took place out of working</p> <p>18 hours.</p> <p>19 "-- A36 was no longer a school pupil.</p> <p>20 "-- A36 was 17 years of age.</p> <p>21 "-- A36 was not in the care of the local authority.</p> <p>22 "The issue centred on what could be considered as</p> <p>23 professional misconduct. The decision of the police not</p> <p>24 to take the matter further because A36 did not wish to</p> <p>25 make a complaint meant that the allegation was</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 52</p>

1 considered as one of professional misconduct. Had the  
 2 Education Service been advised it was unable to take  
 3 disciplinary action because of the above points ..."  
 4 In other words, the bullet points that she sets out:  
 5 "... it is not clear what other courses of action  
 6 may have been possible in respect of A36's allegations."  
 7 Do you agree with those comments?  
 8 **A. I don't.**  
 9 Q. Because?  
 10 **A. My assessment many years before 1995 is that if anyone**  
 11 **had been alleged to have sexually abused any child, then**  
 12 **that professional misconduct was actually gross**  
 13 **misconduct. Because however many years you go back in**  
 14 **the life of practice with children, it was never -- it**  
 15 **has never been anything other than grossly unacceptable.**  
 16 Q. What she appears to be saying here, at least implicitly,  
 17 is that disciplinary action wasn't even indicated, given  
 18 those four bullet points?  
 19 **A. I think she does assess that. It doesn't follow from**  
 20 **the record of events that took place.**  
 21 Q. No.  
 22 **A. Because, clearly, they were looking at professional**  
 23 **misconduct on the basis of the four points that you**  
 24 **highlighted that Dr Hodge concluded.**  
 25 Q. What's your interpretation of what she was saying about

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1 the four bullet points? Was she saying there should  
 2 have been no disciplinary process and that if there  
 3 hadn't been there was no recourse.  
 4 **A. My reading, and I had to read this a couple of times,**  
 5 **was she was saying, "This is the decision that you**  
 6 **reached in terms of carrying out an investigation, even**  
 7 **though there was no complaint and given his age" and**  
 8 **things like that. So I suppose my reading of it was**  
 9 **that she had gone back and read the documents from the**  
 10 **strategy meetings, and whatever meetings had taken**  
 11 **place, and was feeding that back to the council.**  
 12 **I didn't see that as her assessment of what they had**  
 13 **done but on what she had concluded from their records.**  
 14 MR ALTMAN: I understand. Thank you. I see the time. I am  
 15 not going to finish you -- it is not going to be very  
 16 long, Mrs Hopper, but not in sufficient time. Can  
 17 I suggest, chair and panel, you take your break and we  
 18 will finish Mrs Hopper I hope within a reasonable time  
 19 after the break. Thank you very much.  
 20 **A. Thank you.**  
 21 THE CHAIR: Thank you. We will return at 12.05 pm.  
 22 (11.50 am)  
 23 (A short break)  
 24 ( 12.10 pm)  
 25 MR ALTMAN: I have asked for page 17 of the report to go up

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1 on the screen. Under "Managerial Concerns", I think we  
 2 can skip over the first paragraph, but at 5.82, did  
 3 Ms Richardson write:  
 4 "There is a need for a sensitive, considered  
 5 response to staff facing allegations of abuse. It is  
 6 acknowledged that false allegations can be made. It  
 7 must also be acknowledged, however, that situations do  
 8 occur which give rise to doubts about the integrity or  
 9 intentions of staff. Following the strategy meeting and  
 10 the disciplinary hearing of [Leckey], there were  
 11 managerial concerns about this individual which would  
 12 have warranted urgent attention even had his arrest not  
 13 taken place."  
 14 Do you agree with that?  
 15 **A. Yes.**  
 16 Q. "Consideration should be given as to the position of  
 17 the authority, if the management has serious doubts  
 18 about a member of staff. How can such staff be managed?  
 19 If the authority takes its duty seriously to protect and  
 20 safeguard children, then it may find itself liable if it  
 21 can be shown that the authority knowingly allowed  
 22 a member of staff to continue to work directly with  
 23 children when doubts had been raised about their  
 24 behaviour.  
 25 "This matter should be addressed as a matter of

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1 urgency and with reference to the recommendations  
 2 pertaining to recruitment and selection procedures.  
 3 "This is an area which requires further  
 4 consideration, not just in Rochdale, but also at  
 5 a national level."  
 6 You deal with this in your paragraph 18.74. You  
 7 point out the effect of this?  
 8 **A. I do.**  
 9 Q. Has it been dealt with?  
 10 **A. I think it has. I think it was dealt with at that time.**  
 11 **Because the Utting Report, People Like Us, was published**  
 12 **in 1997 and outlined a number of those things in detail**  
 13 **as the Warner Report, Choosing With Care, had addressed**  
 14 **prior to that.**  
 15 Q. Was that the North Wales report that you referred to  
 16 earlier?  
 17 **A. No, that was the Waterhouse Report. There were a number**  
 18 **of reports over a period of five or six years that**  
 19 **addressed a lot of those issues in great detail.**  
 20 Q. Looking at your paragraph 18.7 -- I'm not going to go  
 21 through any more of the report itself, but you summarise  
 22 the conclusions in your paragraph 18.75. Can you just  
 23 tell us, paraphrasing if you wish, what they were?  
 24 **A. The report suggested that the actions taken in relation**  
 25 **to observing the procedures of the ACPC had worked well**

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1 **and there was evidence of good interagency**  
 2 **collaboration. There was no obvious indication that**  
 3 **Leckey was abusing children, but when allegations were**  
 4 **made, they were responded to appropriately and in**  
 5 **accordance with the procedures, and it was possible to**  
 6 **pinpoint some areas for improvement, but there was no**  
 7 **evidence to suggest that the Education Service had**  
 8 **failed in its duty to safeguard and protect the**  
 9 **interests of children, which might be a question if he**  
 10 **had been allowed to remain in work during that period.**  
 11 Q. Thank you very much. That's Dennis Leckey.  
 12 I would like to go to your page 108, just to point  
 13 out that you deal with Anthony Andrews there. Did you  
 14 note that at your paragraph 18.92 Andrews was appointed  
 15 on 30 January 1980 as a house parent at Foxholes  
 16 Children's Home?  
 17 **A. He was.**  
 18 Q. We have heard something about him from Mr Bottomley, but  
 19 let's just see what your records show. On 1 July 1983,  
 20 he was appointed a residential social worker and, on  
 21 25 April 1988, was he appointed an acting assistant  
 22 officer in charge of Foxholes?  
 23 **A. He was.**  
 24 Q. Over the page in your statement, he was transferred  
 25 in March 1989 to work at Elmfield because Foxholes

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1 apparently closed?  
 2 **A. That's correct.**  
 3 Q. On 23 November of that year, he was appointed deputy  
 4 centre in charge at Furness Road Children's Home, where  
 5 he remained until 9 January 1991 when he was suspended?  
 6 **A. Indeed.**  
 7 Q. On 4 March 1991, was he dismissed on grounds of  
 8 misconduct --  
 9 **A. He was.**  
 10 Q. -- following allegations made by two resident children?  
 11 **A. Yes, he was.**  
 12 Q. Going towards the foot of your statement, I think the  
 13 effect is that one child, ciphered A90, alleged she was  
 14 15 when Andrews had begun abusing her after she was  
 15 placed at Furness Road?  
 16 **A. Yes.**  
 17 Q. A friend corroborated her account. As a result, if we  
 18 look over the page, at 18.103, Andrews was suspended but  
 19 denied the allegations. At 18.107, in light of and as  
 20 a result of Operation Cleopatra, did a number of  
 21 individuals come forward to police in 2000 to complain  
 22 about Andrews when he was at Foxholes?  
 23 **A. Yes.**  
 24 Q. In particular, allegations were made by three  
 25 individuals, and that's your page 111: A124, A116 and

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1 A119. On 13 September 2001, was Andrews arrested and  
 2 charged with rape and indecent assault of A118, a fourth  
 3 individual?  
 4 **A. He was.**  
 5 Q. Was he subsequently arrested on suspicion of offences of  
 6 buggery and indecent assault of A124 and bailed pending  
 7 further enquiries and later charged with a number of  
 8 sexual offences in relation to A124, A116, A118 and  
 9 A117?  
 10 **A. Yes, that's correct.**  
 11 Q. We had the outcome from Mr Bottomley, which I won't  
 12 trouble you with, when he gave evidence the other day.  
 13 He was, if my memory serves me, convicted in 2003.  
 14 I am going to take the rest very shortly. You deal  
 15 on page 113 with an individual, Raymond Cullens; is that  
 16 correct?  
 17 **A. Yes.**  
 18 Q. On your page 115, you deal with an individual ciphered  
 19 as D3 --  
 20 **A. Yes.**  
 21 Q. -- in relation to allegations of sexual offending  
 22 against children, and I am not going to take that  
 23 further in relation to them.  
 24 **A. Yes.**  
 25 Q. That's all I would like, please, from your report. But

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1 you are going to help us, I know, Mrs Hopper, in  
 2 a different way, because there are some questions really  
 3 helping us with the geography of what we have heard  
 4 about over the past three weeks but have not really  
 5 visualised. I am told, and I hope it is going to work,  
 6 that we can put Google Maps up on the screens, so I am  
 7 going to ask the evidence handler, please, to put up an  
 8 image, a Google Map image, for postcode OL16 1XU and  
 9 seek your help about things and see if we can expand it.  
 10 Thank you.  
 11 That's how it looks today.  
 12 **A. Yes.**  
 13 Q. In the foreground, in the centre foreground, we have  
 14 a car park?  
 15 **A. Yes.**  
 16 Q. Is that correct?  
 17 **A. That's correct, yes.**  
 18 Q. Where was what everybody has called the "black box"?  
 19 **A. The "black box" was, as I see it, just coming off the**  
 20 **bottom of the screen underneath the word "Google".**  
 21 Q. So it was effectively where that car park is?  
 22 **A. It was at the back of that car park, yes.**  
 23 Q. By "back", you mean what?  
 24 **A. Towards the sign that says "Baillie Street", so it was**  
 25 **the back half of the car park.**

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1 Q. Where the cursor is. That was the multistorey tower  
 2 block?  
 3 **A. It was. In fact, I think it might have been slightly to**  
 4 **the right, because the building over to the left in**  
 5 **front of the larger car park was what was known as**  
 6 **Telegraph House.**  
 7 Q. That's the building that's still there on the left?  
 8 **A. Yes. It was in front of Telegraph House. That became**  
 9 **visible from number 1 Riverside, where it says "Rochdale**  
 10 **Central Library" once the "black box" had disappeared.**  
 11 Q. Where was the old bus station?  
 12 **A. The old bus station was in front of Telegraph House**  
 13 **where the long rectangular car park is.**  
 14 Q. What is that now? Is that a car park or is that the new  
 15 bus station?  
 16 **A. No, that's a car park. The new bus station is the one**  
 17 **that looks like three leaves overlapping each other.**  
 18 Q. Over to the left of the new bus station, we have got  
 19 that building that snakes around. What's that?  
 20 **A. That's number 1 Riverside, that's the current council**  
 21 **building.**  
 22 Q. If we go to the building with three leaves, I think we  
 23 are able to see where the old Smith Street toilets are?  
 24 **A. We are.**  
 25 Q. If the cursor is placed a little to the right and down,

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1 is that it?  
 2 **A. If you take the cursor to the left slightly, it's the**  
 3 **building right on the corner.**  
 4 Q. Those are the old Smith Street lavatories. Where is  
 5 Smith Street itself?  
 6 **A. Smith Street is the road that comes along in front of**  
 7 **number 1 Riverside and the car park, where the tram stop**  
 8 **is.**  
 9 Q. We can just make out the words "Smith Street" there?  
 10 **A. Yes.**  
 11 Q. I think we may have a picture of the old "black box".  
 12 There's the tab up there.  
 13 **A. Yes.**  
 14 Q. Is that it?  
 15 **A. That's correct.**  
 16 Q. I'm told that the photographer is standing where those  
 17 toilets were?  
 18 **A. Right.**  
 19 Q. That's what I have been told?  
 20 **A. Yes. Possibly, yes.**  
 21 Q. Thank you. If we can go back to the maps. What I am  
 22 going to ask now is to look at another part of Rochdale  
 23 we have heard about, where Cambridge House Hostel was in  
 24 Castlemere Street, if that can be brought up. If we can  
 25 perhaps magnify that. I think one of those buildings --

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1 I think the one just to the left of where the cursor is,  
 2 that's the old Cambridge House Hostel?  
 3 **A. It is.**  
 4 Q. I'm not sure if we are able to zoom in At Street View.  
 5 We can. We can actually see it. It says number  
 6 12 Cambridge House?  
 7 **A. That's right.**  
 8 Q. That was it. We understand now it is a private home,  
 9 I think?  
 10 **A. I think it is.**  
 11 Q. That's what we have been told. I think one last tab to  
 12 see where the old Knowl View was.  
 13 **A. Yes.**  
 14 Q. That's, I think, now gone. Is it where we see  
 15 Four Seasons Lawn Treatment?  
 16 **A. Yes. Bamford Mews is a set of apartments off the Norden**  
 17 **Road. If you look just below Four Seasons Treatments**  
 18 **you will see the shapes of the football pitches and the**  
 19 **path going along between the football pitches and the**  
 20 **site of the old building.**  
 21 Q. The footpath I think Mr Bradshaw told us about when he  
 22 gave evidence?  
 23 **A. Yes.**  
 24 Q. Also, if the cursor could move, as it were, north-east,  
 25 we will see a clump of trees. To the right and up.

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1 Further up. Just to the right. That is the copse  
 2 I think we have heard about?  
 3 **A. That's the copse.**  
 4 Q. Where Hilton would sometimes meet boys and where people  
 5 would smoke?  
 6 **A. I understand so. And there were references to the**  
 7 **shops, which are just south-east, where it says**  
 8 **"Tesco Express", there's a little sort of -- a number of**  
 9 **small shops there.**  
 10 Q. Was it a Tesco at the time? Probably not.  
 11 **A. I don't think it was, no.**  
 12 MR ALTMAN: Thank you for your help with that, Mrs Hopper.  
 13 That's all I need to ask you. I think there is one  
 14 question, chair, from Ms Hoyano for which permission was  
 15 given, and then I will invite you and your colleagues to  
 16 ask any questions you may have.  
 17 Examination by MS HOYANO  
 18 MS HOYANO: Thank you, chair. Could I also ask if I could  
 19 just clarify one issue that just arose here in relation  
 20 to Anthony Andrews? You have mentioned he was charged  
 21 with multiple very serious offences against children but  
 22 I don't think we were told whether he was convicted.  
 23 **A. I think that was evidence given by Mr Bottomley.**  
 24 MR ALTMAN: Given by Mr Bottomley.  
 25 MS HOYANO: I see. He was convicted, I take it?

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1 **A. Yes.**  
 2 Q. If I could direct your attention to paragraph 16.51 of  
 3 your statement in relation to the Pindown Inquiry, and  
 4 if we could please pull up RHC001669. Now, while that  
 5 is happening, I know that the members of the panel will  
 6 be very familiar with this very famous investigation by  
 7 Allan Levy QC and Barbara Kahan in 1990-'91, but perhaps  
 8 for the public who are watching, this was an  
 9 investigation into Staffordshire Children's Care Homes?  
 10 **A. It was.**  
 11 Q. Involving a highly punitive punishment regime in which  
 12 children were kept in solitary confinement in  
 13 humiliating circumstances, to the point where they  
 14 became suicidal; is that correct?  
 15 **A. It is correct.**  
 16 Q. In the course of that inquiry, the terms of reference  
 17 were expanded to include the sexual exploitation of  
 18 children within the schools -- within, pardon me, two  
 19 residential care homes by what the author's report  
 20 referred to as a sex ring.  
 21 **A. That's correct.**  
 22 Q. You say in your statement that the findings of  
 23 the Pindown Inquiry and recommendations were directly  
 24 relevant to Knowl View School, and indeed there are  
 25 19 documents on relativity from the council which show

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1 discussions of Pindown.  
 2 If I could refer you to the document that should be  
 3 up on the screen now, if we could blow that up, that  
 4 first page, please, I wanted clarification as to what --  
 5 it says:  
 6 "Criticism highlighted in the Pindown Report that  
 7 are relevant to Knowl View School."  
 8 Do you know who prepared this document?  
 9 **A. We don't know who wrote the document, no. It wasn't --**  
 10 **there is no signature. So we couldn't assign it to**  
 11 **anyone, I'm sorry.**  
 12 Q. Are you able to help us with what "Yes" means? Does  
 13 this mean that Knowl View was, for example, having  
 14 logbook entries but when it says "Staff and visitors  
 15 (undesirable)" and it says "Yes", does that mean that  
 16 the criticism could apply to Knowl View?  
 17 **A. That's certainly my understanding. If you look back to**  
 18 **the evidence that was given by Stephen Bradshaw, he was**  
 19 **certainly referring to some of those issues, that they**  
 20 **didn't actually have a system when he arrived in**  
 21 **relation to the provision of logbooks, people put**  
 22 **information into diaries. So there would be information**  
 23 **about a child but then a reference to having run out of**  
 24 **coffee, I think he said. So he also undertook work in**  
 25 **relation to implementing procedures because there**

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1 weren't clear procedures in place. There were clearly  
 2 concerns about the protection of children. The  
 3 undesirable visitors has been covered in some detail in  
 4 this inquiry, and the protection of children relating to  
 5 that. Obviously failures of management, the quality of  
 6 supervision of staff, the quality and inexperience of  
 7 staff and issues around training. So my reading of this  
 8 certainly was that, where it says "Yes" on the  
 9 right-hand side, then it was an acknowledgement by the  
 10 author that there were similar concerns in Knowl View to  
 11 some of the issues that were raised in the  
 12 Pindown Report.  
 13 Q. Thank you. If we could go, please, to page 3 of  
 14 the document, we see here the recommendations regarding  
 15 access to the school which flowed from the findings  
 16 about the sex ring getting access to the school. We see  
 17 there are three recommendations. One is to maintain  
 18 reasonable control over entrances and exits to  
 19 residential units; the second is to keep a record of  
 20 visitors; and the third is that the police should notify  
 21 social services and schools about the presence of sex  
 22 offenders in the area. So this is in 1991.  
 23 Do you know whether those recommendations were  
 24 applied in relation to Knowl View?  
 25 **A. I don't know the answer to that. I mean, certainly**

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1 **Mr Bradshaw referred to the issues around security and**  
 2 **locking doors. I'm not sure about the information about**  
 3 **people living in the local area. I don't know that.**  
 4 **But I think that the references in this report that we**  
 5 **are looking at now are from the Pindown Inquiry.**  
 6 **I recognise it from the Pindown Report.**  
 7 Q. Yes, they are.  
 8 **A. I think what I was reading the other document to be**  
 9 **saying is, there are similar issues here, and we should**  
 10 **look at it, and certainly there was a four-page memo**  
 11 **from Stephen Bradshaw that was saying, "What about**  
 12 **Knowl View?", at a similar time to when Ian Davey was**  
 13 **putting a report before the Social Services Committee,**  
 14 **saying, "We need to be aware of this".**  
 15 Q. So what, if anything, was done in response to those  
 16 findings and recommendations?  
 17 **A. I don't know.**  
 18 MS HOYANO: Thank you. Thank you, chair.  
 19 MR ALTMAN: Do you, chair, have any questions?  
 20 THE CHAIR: I have a couple for you, Ms Hopper.  
 21 Questions from THE PANEL  
 22 THE CHAIR: You have been telling us about some extremely  
 23 serious incidents and we hear they attracted  
 24 considerable media attention. In your opinion, would  
 25 senior councillors have been informed about all of this

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1 in advance of external publicity?

2 **A. I would say that senior councillors certainly should be.**

3 **It's the expectation of the lead member of children's**

4 **services and the leader of the council now that, if**

5 **information was to be in the public domain, they are**

6 **advised in advance of that wherever possible. So that's**

7 **certainly a current expectation.**

8 **I can't say whether it was an expectation then.**

9 THE CHAIR: Just going back to 1995 and the issues around HR

10 practices at that time and the options available to them

11 for those who have been involved in allegations rather

12 than them actually be found to be true, would you say

13 that options would have included precautionary

14 suspension, removal to an administrative role away from

15 direct contact with children?

16 **A. I would certainly have expected so, and it was clear**

17 **that there were other practices taking place in Rochdale**

18 **ten years before that. Where there were concerns,**

19 **people were being suspended from children's homes but**

20 **not in the Education Department. So there was a real**

21 **inconsistency across the council.**

22 THE CHAIR: Thank you. You have probably answered my second

23 question in relation to this: were you therefore not

24 surprised to see the report suggest that this was

25 described as a national issue at the time?

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1 **A. Well, it almost suggests that people weren't keeping up**

2 **to speed with the information that was being shared very**

3 **widely at a national level.**

4 THE CHAIR: These HR practices in these kinds of

5 circumstances had been in place actually for several

6 years --

7 **A. They certainly had.**

8 THE CHAIR: -- before this person wrote that report?

9 **A. I think what surprised me was that, given the author of**

10 **the report, I would have expected them to have had**

11 **a wider understanding. I think there was -- at**

12 **a national level, there was a different level of**

13 **understanding, in my experience, in some Education**

14 **Departments to what existed in Social Services**

15 **Departments, and that seemed to be mirrored in Rochdale.**

16 **But the person who was authoring the report came from**

17 **a child protection background, so I would have expected**

18 **her to be aware of that.**

19 THE CHAIR: Indeed. It is an interesting observation you

20 make. Does that mean that anyone against whom such

21 allegations were made working in an education

22 establishment like a nursery or a primary school, or

23 whatever, may have been treated differently from those

24 working in a children's home setting or in foster care?

25 **A. I think you would have to say it was possible because**

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1 **that's what happened with Dennis Leckey.**

2 THE CHAIR: Yes, indeed. Thank you very much.

3 PROF SIR MALCOLM EVANS: Could I just really ask a question

4 or two going a little bit further into a point that the

5 chair just made about flows of knowledge. Please let me

6 know if I have got this wrong, but from the chronology

7 that you give, I understand that the dismissal of

8 Anthony Andrews was taking place at precisely the same

9 time in the run-up to the Middleton report, to the court

10 judgment in the Middleton case, and at the same time as

11 both the Education Department and social services were

12 considering issues concerning Knowl View around the end

13 of February/beginning of March 1991.

14 **A. Yes, that would appear to be the case, yes.**

15 PROF SIR MALCOLM EVANS: Was there any evidence that you

16 have seen that any of this information was escalated up

17 to the leaders of the council or the chairs of

18 the committees at that time? I didn't see anything of

19 that nature in the report --

20 **A. No, there was no information to suggest that. The first**

21 **report that we saw in relation to Pindown went to the**

22 **Social Services Committee and that was**

23 **in September 1991.**

24 PROF SIR MALCOLM EVANS: Right. I think then I can probably

25 foreshadow what your answer to this will be, but also,

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1 when you talk about Leckey, you mention that there was

2 a realisation that the situation could be "acutely

3 embarrassing" for the council. Once again, there is

4 nothing in the report that you have put forward to

5 suggest that, although it was known to be a potential

6 embarrassment to the council, this would have been

7 escalated in that way. Have you seen anything to

8 suggest that that would be the case?

9 **A. There is nothing to suggest that there was a formal**

10 **escalation, no.**

11 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

12 MR ALTMAN: Mrs Hopper, thank you very much. Thank you very

13 much for all of your help.

14 **A. You're welcome.**

15 **(The witness withdrew)**

16 MR ALTMAN: Chair, there is about an half an hour of reading

17 by Mr Henderson.

18 MR HENDERSON: Chair, we have one further statement to just

19 publish on the website that we didn't get to yesterday,

20 but it is the second statement of William Roberts, and

21 that's GMP001009. Then there are three statements to

22 read excerpts from just now.

23 Statement of MS DEBORAH DOYLE (read)

24 MR HENDERSON: The first is a statement from Deborah Doyle.

25 If we could bring that up, please, it is GMP000089. If

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<p>1 we just turn over the page to page 2 of this statement,                  2 we will pick up the story in the third paragraph.                  3 Ms Doyle says this:                  4 "It was through my association with the                  5 Residents' Association that I met Chris Davies who was                  6 at that time elected as a councillor at Oldham.                  7 "He was also the prospective parliamentary candidate                  8 for Littleborough and Saddleworth for the Liberal                  9 Democrats.                  10 "I volunteered to work in his office at High Street,                  11 Lees. Although it was voluntary, they paid for my                  12 childcare.                  13 "I would answer phones and letters and would help in                  14 the canvassing for the election.                  15 "Chris Davies was elected and I continued to work in                  16 his office.                  17 "During the conference season in 1995, Chris told me                  18 there was a full time job in Liz Lynne's office which                  19 was for pay, her assistant Adam was leaving.                  20 "I did not know Liz but knew she had been elected MP                  21 for Rochdale, taking over from Cyril Smith.                  22 "She hadn't been Cyril's named successor, he had                  23 backed Paul Rowen.                  24 "I had met Cyril a couple of times as he had helped                  25 in the campaign to elect Chris Davies.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 73</p>	<p>1 written contract."                  2 If we drop down to the bottom of the page, please,                  3 to the paragraph beginning "Cyril Smith would visit the                  4 office sometimes":                  5 "Cyril would visit the office sometimes. He'd ask                  6 me or Elaine [another office worker] to type something                  7 for him if we weren't busy. He was always pleasant                  8 towards me. He held a lot of power in Rochdale.                  9 "In 1996, it would be either January or the summer,                  10 I know that as Liz was on holiday and she always took                  11 holidays at Christmas and summer, Elaine always took the                  12 same holidays as Liz, I received a phone call in the                  13 office. It was from a man called Martin Digan. He told                  14 me he was a former social worker from Knowl View School.                  15 This man seemed very strung out. He was very garbled on                  16 the phone and I didn't quite grasp what he was saying.                  17 "He said that Rochdale Council had sacked him and                  18 that he knew things were going on. He talked about                  19 abuse. He didn't say what sort of abuse. He said that                  20 Cyril had his own keys and would wander about. Also                  21 that people were coming and going and the boys were                  22 vulnerable. He was on the phone for about 30-40                  23 minutes. As he was talking I was making notes. I had                  24 a shorthand pad and took 3 to 4 pages of notes. I told                  25 Martin Liz was on holiday and I'd speak to her when she</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 75</p>
<p>1 "Chris must have put my name forward to Liz because                  2 I was invited in for an interview. I hadn't had to                  3 submit an application form.                  4 "I went to Drake Street Reform Club where Liz had                  5 her offices upstairs. It would have been late 1995,                  6 September or October.                  7 "There was just me and Liz at the interview. It                  8 wasn't really an interview, more like a chitchat to see                  9 if we got on.                  10 "She said as far as she was concerned I'd got the                  11 job but I'd need to run it past Cyril. We jumped into                  12 her car and drove to Emma Street, Rochdale. The door                  13 was opened by I think it was Cyril's sister and we were                  14 shown into the front room.                  15 "Liz introduced me to Cyril.                  16 "He asked me a few questions like how old I was and                  17 did I have children and was I intending to have any more                  18 children, which might interfere with the election                  19 campaign.                  20 "Cyril Smith's sister brought in some tea and                  21 biscuits and we stayed about 30-40 minutes. Cyril was                  22 chatting to Liz.                  23 "I was then given the job. I was Liz's constituency                  24 assistant. I was paid by the government and received                  25 £500 a month. I worked 30 hours a week but had no</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 74</p>	<p>1 came back.                  2 "After I'd put the phone down, I thought 'Is this                  3 guy for real?'. I was thinking he was nuts.                  4 "I kept the notes in my notepad until Liz came in.                  5 "When Liz came into the office I spoke to her.                  6 I can't recall if anyone else was there. Elaine may                  7 have been in the room. Because Liz had been on holidays                  8 there were a lot of things on her desk for her to look                  9 at. I remember one case of a man from Rochdale who was                  10 very upset that one of his parent's ashes had been                  11 removed from the crematorium and buried in a mass grave.                  12 "I gave Liz my notes that I made on Martin Digan.                  13 I'm fairly sure I gave Liz my notebook, but I can't say                  14 she read them. I know I sat at the desk with Liz and                  15 went through my notes and told her everything                  16 Martin Digan had said. I know I thought the man was                  17 slightly weird.                  18 "I told Liz Martin wanted a meeting with him. She                  19 said 'I'm not meeting him'.                  20 "She said, 'This is all the Cyril Smith things                  21 again. I've heard it all before'. Her tone suggested                  22 to me, 'Don't ask me any questions'. She said it was                  23 political mischief. She also said Martin Digan was                  24 suing the council for wrongful dismissal and she didn't                  25 want to get involved.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 76</p>

1 "I asked her if she wanted me to ring him. She said  
2 no and if he rang again to put him off.  
3 "It was at that meeting that I asked her if I should  
4 file the notes and she told me to get rid of them and,  
5 because of the content of them, not to put them in the  
6 bin.  
7 "The notes were still in the notebook and I kept the  
8 notebook in my handbag. I can't say exactly when I got  
9 rid of the notes but I think I took them home and put  
10 them on the wood burner.  
11 "I can't say when I did this. I know, for some  
12 reason, when Liz told me to get rid of the notes,  
13 I wrote Martin Digan's name and number in my 1995/96  
14 filofax. I did this because I thought it was important  
15 to keep his details. I have handed to the police today  
16 [the black filofax].  
17 "This is the only time Liz has ever asked me to get  
18 rid of any notes.  
19 "I also looked in our filing cabinet in the office  
20 and could not see anything in the files about  
21 Knowl View.  
22 "I never spoke to Liz again about Martin Digan.  
23 "I have only spoken to Martin Digan once on the  
24 phone. I never spoke to him again. I cannot say if he  
25 ever rang the office again. I never saw anything in the

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1 office diary of any appointment for him but Liz did keep  
2 her own diary and she didn't always put her appointments  
3 in the office diary.  
4 "In 1997 Liz lost her seat in the election, I was  
5 given one month's notice. During this time we  
6 cleared the office. All the files in the cabinet I put  
7 in black plastic bags and took them to a paper recycling  
8 centre in Heywood where I watched them being shredded.  
9 Nothing was handed over to the new MP who was Labour."  
10 That's Ms Doyle's account. We are now going to hear  
11 some excerpts from Ms Lynne's response to that. If we  
12 could bring up, please, GMP001020. If we zoom in on the  
13 second paragraph there, beginning in 1987. Ms Lynne  
14 says this:  
15 "In 1987 I stood as the prospective parliamentary  
16 candidate for Harwich, Essex, but was not successful.  
17 In 1988/89 I was selected as PPC for Rochdale, which  
18 was against Cyril Smith's wishes as his preferred choice  
19 I think was Paul Rowen or someone called Keith who  
20 I believe was also a councillor. To start with I was  
21 reliant on the help of just a few local individuals such  
22 as Alan Taylor and Angela Coric. Alan, who was  
23 a greengrocer, became my campaign manager in relation to  
24 winning selection as the PPC.  
25 "During that time I was doing speech consultancy

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1 work.  
2 "I was elected in 1992 and the lost the seat in  
3 1997. In 1999 I was elected as an MEP for the  
4 West Midlands and, owing to illness, stood down in 2012.  
5 I am now officially retired."  
6 We will read the top paragraph there over the page:  
7 "Prior to the election as a Liberal Democrat MP in  
8 1992, for the first 18 months that I was the candidate  
9 Cyril Smith went out of his way not to support me and  
10 made my life hell so I would stand down. I was as  
11 bloody minded as he was and I dug in and was determined  
12 that he wouldn't get rid of me. I won him over and he  
13 changed his mind and for the following 18 months up to  
14 the election he was supportive."  
15 She then describes her general experience as an MP,  
16 but if we could go to page 4, she responds to Ms Doyle.  
17 If we zoom in on the paragraph that begins, "I have been  
18 made aware":  
19 "I have been made aware of the account given by  
20 Deborah Doyle in her witness statement and my first  
21 impression in relation to her description of her  
22 recruitment is that it is untrue as regards me taking  
23 her to see Cyril Smith for approval, but I do not  
24 actually remember interviewing her. I would say it was  
25 highly unlikely that I would have sought Cyril's

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1 approval for an office employee. I do refute any  
2 suggestion that she was not formally employed and, as  
3 such, Deborah Doyle definitely would have had  
4 a contract. She would not have been paid otherwise, as  
5 she was a constituency assistant. I would also like to  
6 point out that I usually took a two-week holiday in the  
7 summer but only occasionally went away at Christmas.  
8 I would describe Deborah Doyle's account about the  
9 telephone conversation with Mr Digan and my supposed  
10 advice to destroy her alleged notes as 'ludicrous'.  
11 When the Guardian journalist first approached me he said  
12 that Deborah Doyle said I told her to shred notes that  
13 she says she had taken. I informed him that I didn't  
14 have a shredder. He contacted me the following day to  
15 say he had got it wrong and that she said I said she  
16 should dispose of them and that she thinks she took them  
17 home and put them on the fire. I was devastated by  
18 these accusations as with my personal background I was  
19 one of the last people who would have covered up  
20 child abuse.  
21 "I must add that the timing of the release of  
22 the story to the Guardian newspaper possibly cost me the  
23 presidency of the Liberal Democrats as I had  
24 a comfortable lead, but after the allegations came out  
25 I started losing support. I was asked to stand down but

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<p>1 I refused as I had no reason to stand down. I totally                  2 refute that I ever covered up any child abuse. I was                  3 very upset by the accusation which I feel was malicious                  4 plus I have since learnt from a former MP and MEP                  5 colleague, Chris Davies ..."</p> <p>6 We have heard reference to him:                  7 "... that he too was the victim of a nasty story                  8 released to the press he believes by Deborah Doyle in                  9 1995. I understand that was to do with him employing                  10 a person with a prison conviction rather than Deborah.                  11 The timing of the allegations in the press about me                  12 I believe were very suspect in another way as they were                  13 just before the Heywood and Middleton by-election which                  14 had a couple of wards in it that I used to represent.                  15 Labour subsequently went on to win it.</p> <p>16 "In relation to Martin Digan's statement as regards                  17 an alleged telephone call conversation between him and                  18 myself resulting in an appointment being made but then                  19 cancelled, I do not recall it and if he wanted a meeting                  20 all he had to do was to attend my surgery at the town                  21 hall. In fact that would have been what I and my office                  22 would have suggested, definitely not a separate time and                  23 place for a meeting. I also doubt very much that there                  24 would have been a protracted conversation over the                  25 telephone about child abuse.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 81</p>	<p>1 check up, owing to the passage of time, but I wonder if                  2 my former secretary Elaine Machin can remember documents                  3 and any letters that might have been sent at that time."                  4 She goes on to discuss some further experiences but                  5 none of them are relevant.</p> <p>6 Finally, chair, we are going to read some excerpts                  7 from the account given by Councillor Ashley Dearnley to                  8 Mr Garnham QC's review in 2014. The reason for this                  9 being it gives us the perspective of someone in the                  10 Conservative Party in Rochdale at the time so we have                  11 covered all three main parties. RHC000249.</p> <p>12 Excerpt of Interview of MR ASHLEY DEARNLEY (read)                  13 MR HENDERSON: You will see here the beginning of                  14 the interview. Down the bottom half of that page,                  15 Mr Dearnley explains that he was elected to the council                  16 in 1982 and he was a member of the Conservative Party.                  17 His ward was Wardle and West Littleborough.</p> <p>18 If we could please go firstly to page 4, zoom in                  19 halfway down the page, he is asked:                  20 "LW: Did you ever hear about Cambridge House in                  21 Rochdale?                  22 "AD: No. The first I heard about Cambridge House                  23 was when this issue arose. I had never heard of it.                  24 "LW: Were you aware of any publications in the '70s                  25 about Cambridge House and allegations about Cyril Smith?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 83</p>
<p>1 "However, more recently I decided to look into it                  2 myself and I was sent a press cutting from the                  3 Rochdale Observer which is dated 6 March 1996, in which                  4 it states I wrote that Mr Digan and also wrote to                  5 Valerie Mellor. So based on that article, even though                  6 I do not remember, I must have had communication with                  7 Martin Digan and I acted on it by writing to Mrs Mellor.                  8 I feel this does vindicate me particularly with regard                  9 to the article in the Guardian.</p> <p>10 "I have been shown an exhibit which is a press                  11 article in the Rochdale Observer dated 19 July 1995.                  12 I do not remember it at all which is awful and I can't                  13 remember the documents allegedly given to me by                  14 Martin Digan. Nor can I remember attending any meeting                  15 with Paul Rowen and Ian Davey which the article suggests                  16 was going to occur but I cannot state that it did not                  17 happen. I simply do not remember.</p> <p>18 "If I had received a dossier, I would have sent it                  19 on somewhere, probably to the relevant                  20 Secretary of State such as Gillian Shepherd or the                  21 Director of Education at the council with a covering                  22 letter asking them to look into it and I would have sent                  23 a letter to Mr Digan saying I had forwarded it on and                  24 would send him a reply as soon as I received a response.                  25 Unfortunately, I do not think there is any way I can</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 82</p>	<p>1 "AD: No.                  2 "LW: The Rochdale Alternative Press?                  3 "AD: Yeah, I remember Rochdale Alternative Press.                  4 "NG: You would have been a teenager, wouldn't                  5 you ...?                  6 "AD: I remember issues relating to Cyril Smith,                  7 I certainly don't remember the name Cambridge House.                  8 I do remember the name Knowl View School.                  9 "LW: What issues do you remember?                  10 "AD: The ones that were in the Rochdale                  11 Alternative Press, the innuendo. But I wasn't at the                  12 age where I would really have been that interested in                  13 politics.                  14 "LW: That was 1979, you became a councillor in                  15 1982?                  16 "AD: Yeah, but I think at that age you are                  17 suddenly a young person with other interests and then                  18 when you get into your 20s and perhaps things change.                  19 And of course 1979 I was still part of the ... I was                  20 slightly involved in politics but it was a different                  21 constituency called Littleborough and Saddleworth.                  22 Nothing really to do with Rochdale and what was going on                  23 with Cyril Smith and I knew that obviously, most people                  24 did but ...                  25 "LW: What do you mean by that?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 84</p>

<p>1 "AD: That I'd seen him around the town and knew of 2 him. Most people of my age who lived in this area would 3 have known Cyril Smith. If you walked around in 4 Rochdale you would see him on the market, well that's my 5 involvement. 6 "LW: So when did you first hear about rumours 7 relating to Cyril Smith? 8 "AD: Probably through Rochdale Alternative Press, 9 I guess. And I remember, because we had a business, one 10 chap coming in who obviously was involved with Liberal 11 Party and had been to some rally that Cyril had had 12 I guess prior to the 1979 general election and saying 13 that Cyril had seemed really down because there had been 14 all these allegations by Rochdale Alternative Press. 15 "LW: Did you have a view about the allegations? 16 Did you believe them? 17 "AD: I don't think I had a view about them. 18 "LW: And what about other people in Rochdale? 19 "NG: Were they generally believed? 20 "AD: My guess is that probably they were not 21 generally believed, no. Because I'm sure if they had of 22 been, when you read the quotes, something surely should 23 have happened. It's an incredible situation in that 24 way. 25 "LW: Some people have said that they were believed</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 85</p>	<p>1 slightly involved in Rochdale politics again." 2 There is an inaudible question. 3 "AD: Tall chap. 4 "NG: He was a Tory, a Conservative? 5 "AD: Oh a Tory, yes, yes. 6 "NG: He also may be tall." 7 Then there is a bit of laughter. But then we get 8 this: 9 "NG: But a mate of Smith's? 10 "AD: I came across him at a few of the Rochdale 11 Conservative meetings and I remember that he was always 12 going on about when him and Cyril were both on council 13 together and how Harry managed to have what is a very 14 Labour area of Conservative and they mainly work 15 together and they were great friends. But again the 16 involvement was very limited because I was part of 17 a different constituency so I didn't really attend 18 Rochdale Association meetings unless I was perhaps 19 standing in for Pam Hawton as deputy. And then he just 20 kind of seemed to disappear as quickly as he arrived 21 (Wild)." 22 If we could then go to page 11, and if we go to the 23 bottom of the page starting at "You closed Smith Street 24 toilets, did you?", he is asked about his knowledge of 25 events at the Smith Street toilets, denies knowing</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 87</p>
<p>1 but no-one felt they could actually do anything against 2 Cyril Smith at that time? 3 "AD: There was a fear factor, I am aware of that. 4 I mean I remember on one occasion I must have said 5 something about the Liberal Democrats, the Liberals 6 then, when I was young on council. Pam Hawton being in 7 a room with me and Cyril coming in and she wanted to 8 introduce me to him and he wouldn't be introduced 9 because (he said) 'He doesn't like Liberals'. 10 I think the transcript must be wrong and it must 11 have been "He doesn't like Tories": 12 "It was that kind of petty behaviour with Cyril and 13 then obviously if you remained on the wrong side of him 14 he could make life incredibly difficult. 15 "NG: He could be a bully, could he? 16 "AD: One of my councillors who is dead now, sadly, 17 she ended up having to go to her doctors and get 18 tranquillisers. And she had done nothing wrong, she had 19 just been on a committee where he said she should have 20 declared an interest in. It was very unpleasant. 21 "LW: What about Harry Wild? Do you know him? 22 "AD: Erm ... yes, not well. As far as I am aware, 23 he had left the borough some years ago, I understand 24 relating to these issues. He then came back to the 25 borough probably, the late '80s. He kind of got</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 86</p>	<p>1 anything about it but then is asked this question. 2 Mr Garnham says: 3 "NG: You closed Smith Street toilets, did you? 4 "AD: Yes. 5 "NG: That's actually rather interesting ... 6 "NG: ... Smith Street lavatories were closed for 7 cost cutting reasons? 8 "AD: Cost cutting reasons, well all the 9 lavatories. We closed them in phases. Two different 10 conversations. 11 "AD: There was a bit of an outcry when we did it, 12 we closed one in Heywood, one in Middleton, one in 13 Rochdale, one in my area. 14 "NG: You don't happen to remember when 15 Smith Street was shut, do you? The toilets. 16 "AD: I would have thought ... I was the chair of 17 environmental health, so it could well have been about 18 '92. 19 "NG: That's fascinating. 20 "AD: It is around that kind of time, because it 21 would have been part of the budget cuts at that time. 22 "NG: I mean I laugh and it's not funny really but 23 one of the points that is made by police and others that 24 we have heard from is that it wasn't going on, it wasn't 25 continuing. But the chances are that this may not have</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 88</p>

<p>1 been due to some dramatic improvement in management, it 2 may be that the lavatories had gone. 3 "AD: It would be about that time, I mean, it 4 couldn't be before that could it." 5 Finally, if we could turn to page 16, we are going 6 to see what Mr Dearnley says about the suggestion of 7 a pact between the Lib Dems and Labour. If we could 8 zoom in, please, at the third paragraph down. 9 Mr Dearnley is asked this: 10 "LW: Just to put the final piece together. 11 Barry Cropper suggested that in and around 1991, there 12 was a pact made between Lib Dems and Labour where the 13 Lib Dems said we will keep quiet about F7 if you keep 14 quiet about Cyril Smith. Do you have any knowledge of 15 this? 16 "AD: I have no knowledge of that at all. 17 "NG: Do you think that sort of pact could have 18 happened? 19 "AD: I can't see any political reason why that 20 would happen. I mean, it is possible ... but why on 21 earth would that happen? 22 "NG: The suggestion is that on the one side, 23 namely, the Liberals, adhering to such a pact would 24 result in or would prevent any of the rumours about 25 Smith becoming common currency, and on the other, so it</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 89</p>	<p>1 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Altman. Thank you. 2 (1.00 pm) 3 (The hearing was adjourned to 4 Friday, 27 October 2017 at 10.30 am) 5 6 7 I N D E X 8 9 MR PETER JOHN JOINSON (sworn) .....1 10 11 Examination by MR ALTMAN .....1 12 13 Questions from THE PANEL .....20 14 15 MS GAIL HOPPER (continued) .....22 16 17 Examination by MR ALTMAN (continued) .....22 18 19 Examination by MS HOYANO .....64 20 21 Questions from THE PANEL .....68 22 23 Statement of MS DEBORAH DOYLE (read) .....72 24 25 Excerpt of Interview of MR ASHLEY .....83</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 91</p>
<p>1 is suggested, the benefit would be that the reports of 2 F7's conduct in relation to that young woman would not 3 become common currency." 4 A few lines down. 5 "NG: Did it sound to you the sort of thing 6 that ... were the Labour and Liberals in the sort of 7 relationship where that might have been enforceable? 8 "AD: At that particular time, they were so sort of 9 polarised and so many problems between ... I can't see 10 that actually happening. It may be that there were 11 a couple of councillors from each that were reasonably 12 friendly, may have said something, but I really can't 13 see that, the leadership, they were so difficult at that 14 time. And I can't see why F7 would be so important to 15 the party that they needed to do that, because they 16 could have got somebody else, he wasn't anyone 17 significant." 18 That's all the excerpts from Mr Dearnley's evidence, 19 and that concludes the read evidence. 20 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Henderson. 21 MR ALTMAN: Chair, that also concludes all of the evidence 22 in the course of this investigation. 23 Tomorrow, can I remind everybody, is a non-sitting 24 day, and there will be closing statements on Friday. 25 Thank you very much.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 90</p>	<p>1 DEARNLEY (read) 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 92</p>

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