

23 January 2018

For the attention of Professor Alexis Jay
Chair of the Inquiry
solicitors@iicsa.org.uk

Dear Madam,

Re: Rochdale Inquiry

I am writing about the inquiry into historic child abuse at Knowl View School in Rochdale. I was employed as a policy officer by Rochdale Council from August 1989 until September 1992 when I left the authority to work for the Association of Direct Labour Organisations (ADLO) based in Manchester.

My responsibilities at Rochdale Council included providing political support and assistance to the then leader of the Council (Councillor Richard Farnell) and his deputy (Councillor Jim Dobbin). I also worked closely with the Chair of Education (Councillor Mary Moffat) and other senior Labour councillors at the time. As an officer I was probably closer to the leadership of the council than any other serving officer of the council during the period in question. As such I voluntarily agreed to be interviewed by the police as part of the ongoing Operation Clifton investigation in late 2015 and my statement is included as part of their investigation.

During the time I worked for Rochdale Council I attended meetings including committee meetings and other meetings such as informal briefings involving the leader and his deputy, and I undertook a range of tasks and duties on their behalf. The issue of Knowl View school was never raised at any formal or informal meeting involving the leader at which I was present by any Chief Officer or elected member including councillor Moffat, nor did any report relating to matters concerning Knowl View ever to my knowledge, come before the leadership of the council during that time.

I have followed the inquiry relating to Knowl View school with some interest and I have been concerned at the continuing suggestion that senior Labour Councillors and in particular Councillor Farnell, must have known about issues relating to Knowl View School. Whatever the organisational and governance failings of Rochdale Council in relation to Knowl View school, it is in my view completely misleading to suggest that councillor Farnell 'knew' about Knowl View or indeed ever received a report about it. Had any issue of such a serious nature been reported to the leadership of the council, it would in my view have been acted upon and in any event, would have been reported to the relevant committee or sub-committee of the council and again to my knowledge, it was not.

I hope that you will consider my views in considering your findings.

Yours Sincerely

DPA

Mark Bramah

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