

INDEPENDENT GRENFELL RECOVERY TASKFORCE

THIRD REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 In developing our third report for the Secretary of State, we are once again grateful to the many individuals and organisations who have talked to us. Particular thanks are due to the bereaved, survivors and wider community representatives for sharing their experiences with us. We salute those people who stepped forward in the aftermath of the fire providing community leadership, from new as well as established community groups and resident associations. Their efforts to help others are inspiring.
- 1.2 We would also like to thank many representatives from the voluntary and community sector for talking to us about their experiences of providing support over the past seventeen months. Responding to a tragedy of this scale has inevitably put these organisations under pressure.
- 1.3 It has been some eight months since our last report: this gap reflects our wish to respect the bereaved, survivors and the wider community by avoiding reporting around the one-year anniversary of the fire. We also wanted to allow time for new Councillors to contribute to the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea's (RBKC) work on recovery, following local elections in May.
- 1.4 This report is intentionally more strategic than our second. The report includes our assessment of RBKC's work to date, against our previous recommendations and raises some of the risks and challenges going forward. We also set out some of the outcomes we would like to see by the end of March 2019 and those areas we would like RBKC to make most progress.
- 1.5 We have seen a growing willingness from RBKC to take on board our suggestions and meet our challenges constructively. The leadership of the Chief Executive has been particularly instrumental in this. This is welcomed as a sign of increasing cultural change amongst Councillors and Officers. We do not list everything in this report but would highlight the development of the Grenfell Commitments which changed significantly following intense and detailed input from the Taskforce and others.
- 1.6 We have seen considerable activity by RBKC on all areas related to Grenfell. We do not doubt the commitment of those most closely associated with developing the recovery but recognise that the next 6 months will bring new and additional pressures. We note also that the political leadership has developed over this period. The Leadership Team is resolute in making sure that Recovery is the priority for RBKC.
- 1.7 We have reflected on the journey that RBKC continues to make since June 2017. Our focus is always to consider whether the council's work will aid the recovery of

those most affected by the fire. During this period, we have seen some key developments: RBKC started developing a Grenfell Recovery Strategy and further work to change the culture of RBKC has been undertaken. There are some signs that the organisation is beginning to reinvent itself.

1.8 However, it remains the case that far too often RBKC make avoidable mistakes that negate a lot of good work. We hear far too often of basic errors for example meetings that are not publicised until the day before, of essential emails that go astray and are not followed up. RBKC cannot afford these kinds of elementary mistakes and greater effort should be made to avoid them.

1.9 We are mindful of the on-going Public Inquiry and criminal investigation. More recently questions about possible contamination of the soil in the local area have caused great concern within the local community. These events have and will continue to put significant pressure on RBKC Councillors and Officers. Our concern here is that they will inevitably take up bandwidth of senior personnel that would otherwise have been taken up in driving forward the delivery of the Recovery Strategy and embedding culture change across the council.

1.10 In that context we are concerned whether RBKC have sufficient senior capacity and capability to deal with these pressures while also delivering on a major change programme.

Grenfell Recovery Strategy

1.11 We noted in our second report that the development of a Grenfell Recovery Strategy is essential for the long-term recovery of the local community as well as RBKC itself. This remains our view. This report, therefore, has a strong focus on this workstream. As the process is not complete we cannot give a full assessment of it or of RBKC's ability to deliver. Once the process has been completed we would expect it to be a major component against which we will be able to assess whether RBKC are on the right track to deliver a recovery going forward.

1.12 We note that RBKC took on board suggestions made by the Taskforce (and others) on the Commitments currently being consulted on that will inform the Recovery Strategy. We are particularly pleased that our recommendation to make sure the recovery focuses on social, economic and environmental issues has been taken on board and that the Recovery Commitments identified broad themes of: communities, diversity, health and well-being, jobs and skills, places and spaces and young lives.

Housing

1.13 The standard of property and the degree of personalisation being offered to survivors from Grenfell Tower for permanent rehousing is very high. The council shares our view that too many households are still awaiting permanent rehousing. The rehousing effort must remain a high priority and this work must be completed with appropriate sensitivity and care. Unfortunately, we continue to come across a small number of cases of poor and insensitive management causing unnecessary and avoidable distress. In addition to the rehousing effort we once again comment on the wider housing strategy.

Governance

- 1.14 RBKC have undertaken a lot of work on their governance arrangements. Recovery after Grenfell is clearly set as the overriding priority for the new administration. The political leadership Team appears stronger since the election and resolute in its commitment to Grenfell Recovery. The changes to governance are very much welcome and are beginning to bear fruit, for example Officers have developed new “Values” which have been also adopted by Councillors, and Grenfell Recovery Scrutiny meetings are beginning to operate more effectively. The changes made to date will, however, take time to embed. It is also encouraging to see that Grenfell United now feels able to liaise directly with Council Leadership.

Community Engagement

- 1.15 Reflecting back on our expectations when we started this intervention, and with the feedback we have had from the bereaved, survivors and wider community, we would have anticipated that RBKC would have made greater progress some 17 months after the fire than they have in fact done. Perhaps unsurprisingly there still remains a high degree of mistrust of the council by community groups.
- 1.16 The recruitment of a new head of Community Engagement and strengthening of the team is beginning to make a difference in this area. However, it remains the case that there is little evidence that the council have systems in place that use the knowledge and intelligence of front-line staff to constantly improve how they deliver services.
- 1.17 We think the term “community engagement has therefore been somewhat narrowly defined by the council. In our view this is about RBKC developing a healthier two-way relationship with the people it serves. With your agreement we will in future report on Community Relationship which will encompass Community Engagement.

Next Report

- 1.18 We recommend that we report to you again in Spring 2019. At that time, we hope we can give you an assessment of the Grenfell Recovery Strategy, and how well RBKC are delivering the services within it. We would also hope to be able to report on how cultural change is being embedded across the organisation and give further opinion on how RBKC is reinventing itself. Within this timescale we would hope to see a conclusion to the permanent rehousing effort for Category A households.

ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

2. RBKC are still to conclude the development of their **Recovery Strategy**. Our understanding is that upon completion it will include the dedicated services being developed to support bereaved and survivors as well as the promises developed in response to the current consultation on the Recovery Commitments i.e. the “Stronger Communities” conversation underway in north Kensington which is looking at what are the communities’ priorities for recovery.

- 2.1 They are also working on how best to organise themselves to deliver that Strategy. The plans we have seen suggest that the complete Strategy will be ready to put to Council in early January 2109 although the dedicated service for bereaved and survivors are now running in shadow form. They are preparing now for changes to how services will be delivered, for example planning to increase capacity in some service areas.
- 2.2 While the Grenfell Recovery Plan will be completed by January, its implementation will take time to embed. While we think it has already taken too long to get to this point, we are concerned that the current plans to transition services from the dedicated Grenfell Support Team to mainstream departments is ambitious. We know there are plans to capture and learn from the experience of the Grenfell Support Team and that individuals will be moving across departments to follow the work. It is also clear that front-line staff have been deeply affected by working on Grenfell and the experience has changed **how** they work. We think it is essential that in transitioning services, RBKC make sure that everyone in the mainstream directorates taking on Grenfell responsibilities understand the lessons that have already been learnt by their colleagues. Doing this within the time frame is ambitious.
- 2.3 RBKC should ensure there are contingency plans in place to ensure that where mainstream departments are not yet ready there is no loss of service. RBKC also need to ensure that all departments have the capacity, capability and willingness to absorb Grenfell responsibilities. They would be wise also to avoid cliff edges. Attention needs to be paid to explaining:
- what is happening when, clearly and simply, both internally and externally; and
 - the relationship between the Recovery Strategy and other plans currently in development, for example the Corporate plan.

Key Recommendations

- 2.4 We recommend the Recovery Strategy is completed as soon as possible, so that RBKC has a clear road map to achieving recovery, for which they can be held to account.
- 2.5 We recommended in our last report that the Recovery Strategy needed to be supported by robust delivery plans and that the inter-dependencies between different services needed to be clearly worked through to avoid anyone slipping through the net as well as lessons learnt from other disasters. This remains the case.
- 2.6 In addition to focussing on the immediate recovery issues the Recovery Strategy needs to embrace other areas, including building social capital across the area. We have emphasised the importance of supporting local business as well as making sure there is enough local support to help people improve their skills and job opportunities to RBKC. We have been encouraging RBKC to do more in this area for some time, and while there has been some work we consider it needs greater prominence and support.

2.7 We recommend that RBKC make sure that the Recovery Strategy incorporates greater detail on how they intend to support local businesses, improve skills and create employment opportunities.

2.8 We recommend the Leadership and Executive Team, undertake an immediate review of capacity and capability at senior levels to make sure they can respond appropriately to the Public Inquiry and associated media interest, whilst simultaneously progressing the development and implementation of the Recovery strategy.

PACE

2.9 Pace remains an issue. We had expected that RBKC would have been further forward by this point than they currently are. We recognise that the local government elections in May 2018 presented a hiatus in new decision making and that RBKC would want to show sensitivity in their communications around the time of the one-year anniversary. Nevertheless, both periods were opportunities for officers to progress recovery work that had already been agreed and develop plans for immediate agreement by the new council: this was not particularly evident at the time.

2.10 The pace of permanent rehousing remains painfully slow. That said many of the current delays are associated with works to properties to meet resident preferences. This level of personalisation in the allocation of social housing is unprecedented. The council has introduced a set of procedures (known as boundaries) to seek to bring rehousing decisions to a close. This is supported by the Taskforce as long as they are implemented with the highest degree of care and sensitivity.

2.11 Too many households (16 as of 20 November 2018) continue to live in hotels but for the first time there is a genuine prospect of zero reliance on this type of accommodation. Efforts are being made to achieve this prior to Christmas, but it is likely that a small number of households will remain in hotels over the holiday.

2.12 The remaining work on Category A rehousing requires continued dedicated micromanagement which is both attentive and firm. The setting of deadlines e.g. rehousing completions prior to the Christmas holiday are natural but should not distract from the principle of careful and sensitive management.

Key Recommendation

2.13 We recommend that RBKC remains focused on prioritising the rehousing effort in order that all those made homeless by the tragedy and resettled in good quality permanent homes as soon as possible.

Cultural Change

2.14 We see the culture change across the organisation as being an essential component of RBKC's recovery journey post the Grenfell Tower tragedy. It is also a critical part of living by the "Charter for Families Bereaved through Public Tragedy" they have signed up to. Clearly culture change takes time to develop and

embed across an organisation, nevertheless the broad commitment to ensure this change is embedded and driven forward appears to us to be patchy.

2.15 We have seen some positive developments with Councillor training and the engagement with the wider local government sector has increased. RBKC officers have developed new Values as a key step in changing the culture across the organisation and these have been embraced by Councillors too. We were pleased to hear that the process of developing these was both thorough and developed by officers themselves giving greater chance of buy-in. However, we noted in a recent staff survey that “Putting Communities First” has the least resonance across the council, though it was the most positive amongst officers who have direct contact with the public.

2.16 We noted in our last report that the Chief Executive had initiated some organisational changes early in 2018. He has recently started a review of the RBKC Communications team to strengthen it. We welcome this, however given our previous concerns about communications we would have liked to see measures to address them implemented sooner.

Key Recommendation

2.17 We recommend that RBKC concludes the review of Communications as soon as possible to ensure the Communications Team is fit for purpose and has the necessary experience and capacity to cope with press interest arising from the Public inquiry, criminal investigation, possible soil contamination and can develop a renewed communications strategy.

2.18 We believe there are pockets within the organisation who do not yet understand that the Grenfell tragedy is now the defining feature of RBKC, and that cultural change is required. We still hear on occasion that there is an expectation they will be able to return to business as usual once everyone has been rehoused. We note that the Leader and the Chief Executive are clear that this is not acceptable, and we support them challenging any such attitude. The roll out of Values to all staff only started in October 2018 so it is too early for us to judge how they will shape behaviour within the organisation. This may in part be a consequence of RBKC choosing to commission an external organisation to help them develop new values this approach will have added time to the process.

Key Recommendation

2.19 We recommend that RBKC’s leadership remain focussed and dogged in progressing a cultural change programme across the council ensuring that this effects change in all parts of the organisation.

2.20 We have noted that RBKC frequently chooses to commission external bodies to carry out developmental activities. This may be appropriate now while they are trying to reinvent themselves and establish a culture change across the organisation. We would suggest however that RBKC make sure that they are enhancing the skills and capability of staff for the future so that they are capable and enabled to carry out development activities in the future, rather than having to buy it in. We would also suggest that RBKC make sure that cultural change is delivered as quickly as possible

EMPATHY AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

- 2.21 The experience for many bereaved, survivors and in the wider community is variable.
- 2.22 There is strong evidence that many officers within RBKC have a good relationship with the people they serve. This is a testament to their humanity, skills and hard work and we applaud them. We have heard of several instances where Key Workers have been asked to support individuals in preparing for or in giving testimony to the Public Inquiry or in joining in significant life events like a christening. The relationship Key Workers have with the people they work with is better than it has ever been.
- 2.23 However, this does not translate into trust of the institution “the Council”. RBKC need to reflect on this. We have recommended previously that both senior officers and Councillors need to pay more attention to the views and experience of front-line staff. Further they need to demonstrate that this is part of the new culture within RBKC where senior officers foster challenge, and input from those they manage. We also note that the number of complaints from residents have decreased. While this might be expected at this stage it should still be recognised.

SKILLS

- 2.24 The induction and development programme for new councillors has been put in place and is underway: training courses run through to 2019 and cover subjects ranging from “Being a Community Leader” to “Members Roles and Responsibilities” as well as practical and legal aspects of being a Councillor. This is welcome, and we would encourage all councillors to attend as much training as possible. We have also noted that Members of RBKC are attending more sector led activities and development opportunities. We would encourage this further. We have seen evidence that the Leader and some Councillors are spending more time learning from the wider local government sector.
- 2.25 However, the approach to providing training is quite traditional and will take a long time to embed. We think the council could have demonstrated greater innovation and needed to inject pace into this work.

Key Recommendations

- 2.26 We recommend that RBKC develop as a matter of urgency standards for all external communications to make sure they are timely, clear and fit for purpose – in other words all external communications need to get the basics right.

INNOVATION

- 2.27 We have noticed pockets of innovative practice within RBKC. Most welcome are the genuine attempts made by the council to initiate co-design of some services with local people. This has not been common practice in RBKC, so we note this as a change in culture too. As these conversations are still underway we cannot report on the outcomes and whether RBKC are genuinely taking suggestions on board: early indications are that they have every intention of doing so. It would be

a clear measure of culture change should RBKC commit to embedding a co-design approach across all its services and we would support such a move.

2.28 We also know of several instances where local people have been part of interviewing or commissioning panels. Again, this is a new practice within RBKC and one that we hope will help engender a better relationship between the council and local people.

2.29 The Council has commenced a consultation exercise on the future of housing – “Solving the challenge together”. This root and branch exercise is to be welcomed and provides a perfect platform for innovation, not least because some of the housing challenges in K&C are greater than anywhere else and therefore traditional responses are likely to prove less effective.

GOVERNANCE AND DELIVERY

3. Early on in this period RBKC took on board Taskforce advice that meetings between the council and the people they serve needed different structures, locations and ways of working tailored to different requirements. We characterised these as:

- proper scrutiny of decisions;
- regular meetings where the public can air shared concerns and discuss them with the council;
- a place where individuals can access senior personnel and Councillors to discuss personal issues.

3.1 These aligned with recommendations made by the Centre for Public Scrutiny.

3.2 We note also that relations with bereaved and survivors’ groups have progressed. We were pleased that Grenfell United felt they could engage with some Councillors in order to seek progress. This has required courage and maturity from both sides and we fully support this move. We note also that the political leadership has developed over this period. The Leader is resolute in making sure that Recovery is the priority for RBKC.

3.3 Over the past eight months we have seen some improvement in the scrutiny process. The Grenfell Recovery Scrutiny meetings are beginning to work better though there remains room for improvement. The council is beginning to deliver several CfPS recommendations. It has started a borough wide conversation on priorities, is looking to establish a Citizens Panel and has set up a Listening Forum.

3.4 Some Cabinet members have been highly visible amongst the North Kensington community and shown their appetite for community leadership, for example the Cabinet member for Children’s Services.

3.5 Transparency can help with trust. The reporting of formal meetings and how they are presented on RBKC website needs urgent attention. The overall look

and approach remain old-fashioned: papers need to be concise, written in plain English, jargon free and with the decision to up front. Guidance on how to do this has been circulated recently and some small improvement has been noted, but a lot more needs to be done. We note that RBKC say that work is underway to simplify how information is presented on their website and the decision-making process. We welcome this.

HOUSING

4. The progress made on rehousing those made homeless by the fire, remains a key priority. In the immediate aftermath of the tragedy everyone would have expected RBKC to be further on with this 17-months on. Households still living in hotels or other forms of temporary accommodation over 17 months after the fire is unacceptable. Much of this is the legacy of problems we highlighted in our previous reports: poor understanding of people's needs until relatively late in the process alongside poor alignment against suitable properties.
 - 4.1 There have been positive developments over the period. The standard of property and the degree of personalisation of properties being offered is very high. The focus on "personalisation" of properties to meet residents' preferences is welcomed and unprecedented in the allocation of social housing.
 - 4.2 We support the introduction of "boundaries" aimed at bringing rehousing decisions to a head. However, we will be monitoring to ensure this is sensitively administered.
 - 4.3 Unfortunately, there is still some evidence of poor management and administration in the rehousing process, which is causing unnecessary and avoidable distress for residents. We have heard stories that indicate "same-old" social housing allocation attitudes that is far from the high quality treatment we would wish to see for everyone affected. Fortunately, these appear to be isolated instances and not typical of the overall approach.
 - 4.4 Progress towards concluding the rehousing of those made homeless from the Tower and immediate vicinity requires no further policy changes, but simply dedicated and personalised packages of support which are micromanaged in a sensitive and careful manner. It is fair to say however that in some instances residents requesting additional personalisation has added to the length of time before properties are ready to be moved into.
 - 4.5 Attention is turning more fully to applicants from the walkways who were displaced. There should have been better communication with this group of residents many of whom have felt "forgotten".

The Council's Housing stock

- 4.6 The winding up of the TMO and the transfer of staff appears to have been generally well handled. A more intensive management service has been

introduced at Lancaster West Estate where Residents acknowledge early signs of improvement. Residents Survey information from across the council stock indicates a recent trend of improvement in Council repairs.

- 4.7 At Lancaster West, residents report some service improvements, but much progress has still to be made in their view. Whilst a consultation exercise on a refurbishment programme on the estate has started, resident representatives appear unimpressed and want greater attention and energy focussed on getting the basics right.
- 4.8 The Council has launched an engagement exercise with council tenants and leaseholders (using a company called Traverse). Whilst initially well received this exercise now seems to be losing support. The exercise is focussed on how (the more meaningful) stock options discussion will be structured. Some residents are frustrated with the distance from any real decisions. This needs to be accelerated.
- 4.9 The council stock needs catch up investment. A stock condition exercise has been commissioned to report in December. There will be a major challenge to prioritise investment decisions (as there will be insufficient resources to complete all necessary works immediately), whilst at the same time regaining the confidence and trust of residents.
- 4.10 The Silchester estate has already been prioritised for investment, which is to be welcomed, given its difficult history of relationships with the council.
- 4.11 The lifting of the HRA borrowing cap, may offer an opportunity to accelerate investment. As soon as details are available this will need to be explored as a matter of urgency.
- 4.12 There is a concern that the level of management input being afforded to the Lancaster West estate is financially unsustainable as a management model to be extended across the whole stock and may even be financially unsustainable to continue at Lancaster west.

A Wider Housing Strategy

- 4.13 As one of the highest value housing areas in the world, nowhere is the question of access to good quality affordable housing, more stark. There is an acute shortage of larger family homes, within the council's own stock. Whilst it is entirely appropriate that attention and resource has been focused on the immediate aftermath of the Grenfell tragedy, the council needs to consider a longer-term Housing Strategy for the borough.
- 4.14 In this respect, we welcome the recently published discussion paper, led by the Deputy Leader, "Kensington and Chelsea Homes: solving the challenge together". We see this as an opportunity to consider and develop a step-change in the future of affordable housing in K&C and will encourage the Council to be bold, ambitious and innovative in meeting the challenge.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT – COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIP

5. The recruitment of a new head of Community Engagement has made a significant difference. The change in approach – moving from a “consultation” to a conversation on RBKC Recovery Commitments shows the influence she and her team have made. We have noted and welcome their proactive engagement with a wide range of stakeholders and willingness to take on board ideas and suggestions. We also welcome the many practical steps the team have taken, for example putting together a consultations calendar consolidated across the council. We have heard often that bereaved, survivors and residents are worn out by the many times they are “consulted” by RBKC. While we understand this is a demonstration of RBKC wishing to engage with its community we would suggest the council looks to consolidating their conversations with the community going forward. The many different consultations being carried out by different sections of the council is an indicator that it continues to work in silos.
- 5.1 We have referred earlier to evidence that many officers within RBKC have a good relationship with the people they serve. We know of many instances where individuals – mostly those delivering front line services - have been praised by bereaved, survivors or members of the wider community. We think their learning and expertise of how to work with communities in a genuinely open and collaborative fashion should be shared across all mainstream services who will in the future be working more directly with that community. This approach once properly developed needs to be embedded across the whole organisation so that this becomes the defining characteristic of how the council works with its people. In addition, we think more can be done in making sure there is a culture where feedback from front-line staff is heard by senior personnel and is integral to improving service delivery.
- 5.2 We have heard often that while individual officers may have respect and trust this does not translate into trust of the institution “the Council”. It is not clear whether the mistrust is of the institution as a whole or the “political class”. In either case we suggest that making a fundamental cultural change in the organisation will begin to address this. We urge RBKC to reflect on this and put more thought into the relationship they have and want to have with the people they serve. The goal of community engagement is to have an engaged community.

Key recommendation

- 5.3 We recommend that RBKC further strengthen their efforts to repair and improve relationships with their communities. This should include making sure that all front-line staff understand that they have a role in raising issues to Senior Officers as a matter of course; and that Senior Officers need to foster a culture where listening to intelligence from the front-line is the norm.
- 5.4 We have previously commented on the need for RBKC to improve their communications. We have seen a lot of improvement in the level and style of internal communication and the team should be commended for this. However, we still hear far too often that RBKC external communication is poor. This is an

area where mistakes can completely negate any progress that has been made. There are examples of meetings and paper being publicised too late as well as papers and letters that are confusing and use jargon and technical language. The Chief Executive is undertaking a review of the Communications function. This is not solely a matter for the central communications team, all departments need to consider how they communicate for example avoiding jargon, or over reliance on RBKC website and considering other channels that might be better suited to the audience.

Key recommendation

- 5.5 We recommend that the Communications review is completed as a matter of urgency.
- 5.6 We have recommended previously that both senior officers and Councillors need to take into account the views and experience of front-line staff. Further they need to demonstrate that this is part of the new culture within RBKC. While this does occur in some areas we are yet to see evidence that this is a key part of the culture of the council and extrapolated at a strategic level. We would also like to see the new approach developed by the Community Engagement Team embedded across the council at all levels.
- 5.7 With your agreement in future we will report on the broader issue of RBKC relationship with the Community.

CROSS CUTTING SUPPORT AND THE GRENFELL RECOVERY STRATEGY

- 6 During the period covered by this report RBKC have begun the process to achieve a Grenfell Recovery Strategy. RBKC Leadership Team approved “Our Commitments to those affected by the Grenfell Tragedy” on 25 July. This is a joint document drafted by RBKC and the NHS which sets out their aims and commitments to survivors, bereaved and the wider community. It identifies medium and long-term outcomes up to 2027 and has formed the basis of a conversation with the local community to develop a longer-term Recovery Strategy under the title “Creating Stronger Communities. We were pleased that RBKC took on board advice from the Taskforce as well as others in developing the Commitments. RBKC have set up a number of channels for the conversation on “Our Commitments” including 10 workshops, 12 drops in sessions as well as a dedicated website. RBKC intention is to develop a draft Recovery Strategy by the end of November in time for the Leadership Team to agree in early January. The original timetable suggested that the development of the Recovery Strategy would be further forward than it is. This is however in part a response to the local community asking for more time to have this conversation with RBKC. We recommended in our last report that it was essential that RBKC engaged with the local community in the development of the recovery strategy. So, we commend their willingness to extend the consultation.

- 6.1 RBKC are currently engaged in a conversation on what the priorities are for the Recovery Strategy. At the same time, they are moving forward on developing the dedicated services for the bereaved and survivors and intend to run a “shadow service” during December. They are also working on how they will transition services from the current Grenfell Team to mainstream services. We think this is the right approach to take.
- 6.2 However, we are concerned about the readiness of mainstream services to take on board Grenfell related work. We recommend that RBKC transition gradually so there is no cliff edge, and that they have robust contingency plans. RBKC need to ensure that all departments across the council have the capacity, capability and resources needed to absorb Grenfell responsibilities in to their day to day work.
- 6.3 In addition, the picture remains muddled: there needs to be greater clarity on how all the different services fit together, who will deliver what, and what outcomes will be achieved: it is essential that those who are meant to implement changes fully understand this so that there is no adverse impact on the bereaved, survivors and the wider community from these changes. The Recovery Strategy needs to be coherent, properly resourced, widely understood, especially across the community, and delivered. RBKC need to make it clear to all stakeholders how the various plans work with each other. We are aware that they will be developing a Corporate Plan in due course and the relationship between the Recovery Strategy and the Corporate Plan should be made clear.

Key Recommendation

- 6.4 We recommend RBKC immediately review the proposed transition of Grenfell related services, ensuring that it has the skills, capabilities and resources in place, so that high quality support to service users is not put at risk.
- 6.5 This requires political and officer will, as well as adequate resourcing. RBKC are going to have to look at ways to make sure this is properly funded. We think it is prudent for RBKC not to rely on the possibility of additional funding from central government beyond what they have already received. They must have robust financial management in place to gain complete confidence in the Recovery Strategy’s deliverability. We suggest that RBKC look at creative ways of ensuring they have sufficient funds to deliver recovery. We would support RBKC demonstrating innovation or creativity to ensure they have sufficient funds to deliver the Recovery Strategy, and hope that, where possible, Government would respond constructively too.
- 6.6 We note that current plans suggest that the Grenfell Team will be in place for some time to come. We think this is right: it is important that officers who have been working directly on Grenfell share their learning, experience and new ways of working with colleagues less close to this work. This will take time.
- 6.7 We note that RBKC’s relationship with and support for its early years, schools and young people services remains strong. The Officer team and the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services approach to community leadership is

commendable. The Council's approach to tracking the progress of children and young people affected by the fire is impressive and should develop into a long-term commitment. It is also the case that RBKC's relationship with the local Clinical Commissioning Group and other health partners remains effective and productive.

NEXT STEPS

7. In our view RBKC have not yet made sufficient progress in recovery, particularly with regard to the community relationship and culture change across the organisation. We are still not seeing enough successful outcomes: external communication with the Grenfell community remains patchy, the programme that will help improve the social economic and environmental offer in the north of the borough is not yet fully developed, and the rate of people moving into properties remains low. At this stage we would see as a minimum the following outputs and outcomes:
 - Everyone made homeless by the fire has been rehoused;
 - A comprehensive Recovery Strategy in place that has clear community sign-up, with clear action plans that are being delivered on time and to a high standard.
 - A visible culture change across the council where the values are not just words on a page but are brought to life in everything that RBKC do.

7.1 As noted earlier in the report we suggest that we report to you in Spring 2019. This will give RBKC some four months in which to embed the Recovery Strategy and begin to deliver on some of its promises.

Performance against Recommendations

Governance & Delivery		Timescale	Assessment
1	Council Members: The brief for the review of governance commissioned from the Centre for Public Scrutiny should be extended beyond a review of structures and processes to include what good looks like in relation to the behaviours and performance in role of Members. This should be done with a view to incorporating this into the induction for new Members, post local election in May 2018.	May 2018	Achieved Following the election, a compulsory induction day was held for all Councillors. Training sessions for Councillors has been set up and runs through to 2019. More recently Councillors are working with HR to identify personal development plans.
2	Focus on delivery: the scale of the challenge is significant. To date the pace of delivery of many services has been poor - pace needs to be added as a matter of urgency. We recommend the Chief Executive further bolsters the capacity and capability at the most senior level to add pace to operational delivery. If this requires additional resource, then that should be allocated.	Immediate	Variable Community engagement has improved considerably. This improvement is however late in the day and that has impacted on the deliverability of a number of workstreams. Internal communication has improved, but external communication remains hit and miss. We have seen examples where the timing and / or the content of an external communication can undermine a lot of hard work.
	Oversight and accountability: central government oversight was and remains necessary. However, the frequency and intensity is having an impact on the ability of RBKC to deliver on the ground. We suggest the weekly Ministerial Recovery Groups (MRG), chaired by the Communities Secretary, should be reduced in frequency.	Immediate	Achieved
Housing			
4.	Rehousing: the pace of permanent rehousing (for Category A&B) residents must be accelerated with clear realistic targets for delivery.	Strategy and targets agreed immediately	Improving Provision and quality of supply has on the whole been good. However, it will only be when everyone has been re-housed in the permanent accommodation that we could consider RBKC have been successful. We support the introduction of “boundaries” to bring rehousing decisions to a close.
5.	Housing Management: the future management and ownership of the Council’s housing stock should not be pre-	June 2018	Variable

	determined. There are many ways that management of the housing stock can be delivered and all of them should be considered. A detailed consultation with residents will also be required.		The transfer of the TMO's responsibilities to the council was smoothly and swiftly handled. The focus on "catch-up repairs" was welcomed. However, the engagement exercise on consulting on future housing options appears to be progressing too slowly for residents. Residents are yet to see and significant improvement in service quality.
6.	Lancaster West Estate: A plan to be adopted in consultation with local residents for the comprehensive improvement of the estate. This is to include future plans for the site of the Tower.	June 2018	Variable Consultation events have occurred designed with local residents. These were initially well received, and plans are moving forward but residents are wanting greater focus on basic service improvement.
Community Engagement			
7.	Care for Grenfell: ensuring there are sufficient people focussing on improving the support to the bereaved, survivors and the wider community must be addressed immediately. Consideration should be given to innovative ways that will increase capacity quickly for example looking at re-prioritising work across RBKC that could free up resource to bolster the immediate support.	December 2017	Improving We note that the relationship between some Officers from the Grenfell Support Team and the people they serve is exceptionally good. We also note that the number of complaints has reduced.
8	Prioritisation: many actions have been suggested and agreed that could make an immediate difference on the ground. However, in too many cases these have not been delivered. Ensuring these are delivered will begin to engender trust in RBKCs ability to deliver. Actions for immediate focus that have been promised must be logged and delivery ensured.	November 2017	Variable We have noted that RBKC have failed to identify and deliver on quick wins previously. RBKC need to be realistic and honest about what they can deliver by when and then deliver on it. They should at all costs avoid over -promising. Inevitably it is the case that any failing by the Council reinforces feelings that RBKC do not deliver on anything. There is a risk here that staff feel unable to make mistakes.
9.	Community Engagement: All Policy development and service delivery across the Council should have community engagement considerations and impact embedded at their heart, just like the approach to Equality Impact Analysis. The Council needs to do a detailed mapping of its community so that it can better understand it.	December 2017	Improving This area has shown considerable improvement. New approaches and ways of working are in evidence within the team. We would like to see these rolled out and embedded across the council.

Cross-cutting			
10	Working holistically: The Council needs to bring together all information on victims and survivor needs into a central knowledge and data management system, ensuring that there is rapid transfer and sharing with all front-line staff and service delivery partners, with real-time management of accuracy.	November 2017	Improving We have seen evidence that officers are working across different disciplines, particularly housing and care service requirements to gain a more rounded understanding of individual and family needs. However, this does not always equate to a joined-up policy approach from the different disciplines. Further we would urge that the Council ensure this more joined up way of working is transferred across once services transition from the dedicated Grenfell Support Team to the wider council departments.
11.	Personalised Key Workers: need to be designated as the 'single point of contact' for the bereaved and survivors, who can then represent them, take responsibility and are empowered to follow up action from across the Council and support agencies. Systems need to be examined to make sure there are no "pinch-points" that hold up delivery.	Significant improvements by end November 2017	Improving The Key Worker model was inherited from London Gold and has had a varied degree of success. In many cases Key Workers have demonstrably made a difference to survivors and bereaved. We know of some cases where they have been asked to support individuals and families at the Public Inquiry.
12.	Improving support and empathy: training for all staff directly involved in providing support to the bereaved and survivors in how to engage with those who have suffered major trauma. Sensitivity to culture and faith should be key aspects of this training. This will take some time, but we would advise that this starts as quickly as possible.	Commenced December 2017	In train A training programme for Councillors is in place. Training has already been provided on several areas of Councillor responsibilities. Training has been provided to 145 front line staff on PTSD and Trauma Awareness. Councillors are offered structured one to one Personal Development Planning sessions and 13 have taken up the offer so far and feedback will be used to inform the Member Development Programme for 2019. We welcome in particular the offer of Communicating Effectively training to improve listening and customer relationship skills and note that Housing Management, Housing Needs and Grenfell Key Worker teams are amongst the first to take this up.
The Site			

13	Covering the Tower: management of the site is not currently the responsibility of RBKC. Nevertheless, we would strongly recommend that those responsible for it accelerate covering the Tower. It is reprehensible that it has remained uncovered for so long.	December 2017	Not the responsibility of RBKC The covering of the Tower, with a suitable banner at the top, in the weeks before the one-week anniversary was a major step in helping everyone who lived or worked in its shadow to begin a process of recovery.
----	---	---------------	--

RECOMMENDATIONS FEBRUARY 2018

	RECOMMENDATION	BY WHEN	ASSESSMENT
14	RBKC need to ensure there is proper scrutiny of decisions relating to Grenfell going forward. We commend the report from the Centre for Public Scrutiny published on 7 March 2018 and recommend RBKC give serious consideration to their recommendations. We suggest that RBKC develop and share a clear plan, with clear timescales for ratification by the new council following local elections.	Plan and Timescales to be ratified by end May 2018.	<p>Good</p> <p>Changes have been put in place on the Grenfell Recovery Scrutiny Committee. The Taskforce has been present at all committee meetings and has noticed an improvement in how they are working.</p> <p>RBKC have put in place plans to deliver a number of the CfPS recommendations including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Borough and Area Governance and Review Panel looking at how decisions that affect the whole borough are made; and how to best devolve decision making to an area level and what decisions can best be taken at this level.
15	We reiterate the recommendation from the first report that bolstering capacity to support operational delivery would inject more pace by cutting through the bureaucracy and delivering faster outcomes.	End May 2018	RBKC have previously resisted this recommendation. We return to it now as we consider that the pressures and challenges from the Public Inquiry, the police investigation and concerns about soil contamination are putting pressure on the senior officers at a time when fundamental changes to the Grenfell response are planned. In order to ensure that all workstream are driven forward we think more capacity is needed.
16	RBKC needs to develop a recovery vision for the bereaved, survivors and the wider community. We strongly suggest that RBKC develop such a plan with the local community. This would require much more than the usual “consultation”.		<p>In train</p> <p>This is taking longer than we would have liked. Work needs to be done on success measures with clear accountability and how performance will be scrutinised. All of this needs to be communicated clearly using a range of channels.</p>

	<p>Separately, and building on individual plans, RBKC should develop a comprehensive and strategic recovery plan as a matter of urgency. The plan should articulate the way in which RBKC, with other statutory partners will achieve better outcomes including clear policy frameworks, absolute clarity on who is responsible for what, and the need for collective endeavour. We have seen individual elements of recovery being driven forward separately. The purpose of the comprehensive plan should be to bring the different strands together, work through the inter-dependencies between them and, as RBKC have themselves noted draw on lessons learnt from other disaster. We note that a workshop is planned for early March to start this process.</p> <p>We recommend that the above plan includes areas that have, so far, not been prominent, including considering the full range of social, economic and environmental issues for example support for local businesses which have been affected by and since the fire. We suggest it also plans for medium and longer term.</p>	<p>End September</p>	<p>The proposed transition from dedicated Grenfell Support Team to mainstream services should be under-pinned by robust contingency plans and no services should have a cliff edge.</p> <p>Every effort should be made to ensure that at the least there is no drop in service levels for those who are happy with their contacts. Overall RBKC should be looking to ensure changes will improve the experience of those using the services included in the Recovery Strategy.</p>
<p>17</p>	<p>We recommend that urgent attention be given to internal communications: firstly, to make sure that front –line staff understand RBKC policies where these exist and are kept up to date with any changes. Where policies do not exist or are not fully formed staff must be given every support and kept informed of the parameters of the service offer from RBKC. We see a disconnect between the bereaved, survivors and the wider community and the top of the office. This makes decision making both complex and slow. So, in addition to information flowing down to front line workers we recommend that there should be a simple system for frontline workers to feedback to the top of the office. Senior officer and</p>	<p>By end May</p>	<p>Internal communications have improved. External comms still poor</p> <p>We note that a lot of work has gone into making sure that everyone in the Council is aware of Grenfell related developments. We have seen some evidence that front line officers are kept better informed of any policy changes and how these impact on individual discretion. We have seen some evidence that the front-line experience is beginning to influence decision making at the top of the office. We suggest that this needs to be consolidated.</p> <p>External communications, often on the simplest of things remains poor. We have several examples where meeting</p>

	Councillors need to act on that feedback constructively and swiftly to improve service delivery.		times, dates, locations are late, wrong or simply poorly communicated. RBKC website as a major element of the public face of RBKC needs an urgent overhaul. Effective governance is materially
18	RBKC needs to listen more to those who have the trust and confidence of the local community and act on their recommendations. Local voluntary and community groups within the area have invaluable knowledge and experience and can help improve how RBKC deliver services. In addition, they have greater credibility with local people. Where the voluntary sector sees value in RBKC services they will be happy to sign-post people to them.	From March 2018 and on-going.	Improving There is evidence that they have started to do this and have engaged some trusted local people to work with the local community. While there are pockets of this we would like to see more. We also need to see that the council is using that local knowledge to help shape their policies going forward. In addition, we recommend that examples of these policy changes are communicated back so that communities know they are having an impact.
19	RBKC needs to start working out now how it can work with the local community so that their service delivery is strengthened by the social capital noted above. This will not be easy, will take considerable time, and will require creativity and a genuine willingness to work constructively.	From March 2018 and on-going	In train There are several work-strands that contribute to this: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The conversation about recovery currently underway in the north of the borough • Improving governance measures including a borough wide conversation supported by the Campaign Company and the establishment of a Listening Forum the establishment of which is being supported by the Democratic Society. These are a start to RBKC establishing and strengthening a better relationship with the local community, but they are still in the early stages.
21	The Rehousing plans are paramount to the recovery effort. The council is pursuing a particular policy and approach. We understand the council is developing a further approach, within the current policy, to respond to those whose needs are not being met. This needs to be done urgently.	May 2018	Achieved - The approach to rehousing Category A applicants has developed an increasingly personalised approach.

Key Recommendations from the Third Report

	Context	By When	Key Recommendations
22	<p>Overall Capacity and Capability We are concerned as to whether RBKC have sufficient senior capacity and capability to deal with the pressures that have and will continue to arise from the Public Inquiry, the criminal investigation and possible contamination of soil while also delivering on a major change programme.</p>		We recommend the Leadership and Executive Team, undertake an immediate review of capacity and capability at senior levels to make sure they can respond appropriately to the Public Inquiry and associated media interest whilst simultaneously progressing the development and implementation of the Recovery strategy.
23	<p>The Recovery Strategy RBKC are still to develop their Recovery Strategy. Our understanding is that upon completion it will include the dedicated services being developed to support bereaved and survivors as well as the promises developed in response to the current consultation on the Recovery Commitments i.e. the “Stronger Communities” conversation underway in north Kensington which is looking at what are the communities’ priorities for recovery.</p>		We recommend the Recovery Strategy is completed as soon as possible, so that RBKC has a clear road map to achieving recovery, for which they can be held to account.
24	<p>The Recovery Strategy We have emphasised the importance of supporting local business as well as making sure there is enough local support to help people improve their skills and job opportunities to RBKC. We have been encouraging RBKC to do more in this area for some time, and while there has been some work we consider it needs greater prominence and support.</p>		We recommend that the Recovery Strategy once complete incorporates greater detail on how RBKC intends to support local businesses, improve skills and create employment opportunities.
25	<p>The Recovery Strategy However, we are concerned about the readiness of mainstream services to take on board Grenfell related work. We recommend that RBKC transition gradually so there is no cliff edge, and that they have robust contingency plans.</p>		We recommend RBKC immediately review the proposed transition of Grenfell related services.

25	<p>Housing The remaining work on Category A rehousing requires continued dedicated micromanagement which is both attentive and firm.</p>		<p>We recommend that RBKC remains focused on prioritising the rehousing effort in order that all those made homeless by the tragedy and resettled in good quality permanent homes as soon as possible.</p>
26	<p>Culture Change We see the culture change across the organisation as being an essential component of RBKC's recovery journey post the Grenfell Tower tragedy. - - On the negative side we think that there are pockets within the organisation who do not yet understand that the Grenfell tragedy is now the defining feature of RBKC, and that cultural change is required</p>		<p>We recommend that RBKC's leadership remain focussed and dogged in progressing a cultural change programme across the council ensuring that this effects change in all parts of the organisation.</p>
27	<p>Getting the Basics Right It remains the case that far too often RBKC make avoidable mistakes that negate a lot of good work. We hear far too often of meetings that are not publicised until the day before, of essential emails that go astray and are not followed up. RBKC cannot afford these kinds of elementary mistakes and every effort should be made to avoid them.</p>		<p>We recommend that RBKC develop as a matter of urgency standards for all external communications to make sure they are timely, clear and fit for purpose – in other words all external communications need to get the basics right.</p>
28	<p>Communications We would recommend that the (Communications) review is completed as quickly as possible with a view to improving external communications as a matter of urgency.</p>		<p>We recommend that RBKC concludes the review of Communications as soon as possible to ensure the Communications Team has the necessary experience and capacity to cope with press interest arising from the Public inquiry, criminal investigation, possible soil contamination and can develop a renewed communications strategy.</p>
29	<p>Community Engagement: We urge RBKC to reflect on this and put more thought into the relationship they have and want to have with the people they serve. The goal of community engagement is to have an engaged community.</p>		<p>We recommend that RBKC continue with their recent effort to repair and improve relationships with their communities. This should include making sure that all front-line staff understand that they have a role in raising issues to senior Officers as a matter of course; and that senior Officers need</p>

			to foster a culture where listening to intelligence from the front line is the norm.
--	--	--	--