



Department for
Communities and
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Dear Resident,

As I mentioned in my letter to you last week, I am today writing to you to share the initial report from the independent Grenfell Recovery Taskforce. You will find this attached. Later today, I also plan to stand in the House of Commons and speak to their findings and recommendations.

As a reminder, the Taskforce was established in order to help the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) develop the capabilities needed to support the survivors and address the long-term legacies of the fire. The Taskforce was also given the important task of providing me with reassurance about the ability of RBKC to deliver on these fronts.

It is clear from the report that progress is being made. Much-needed change has happened, and continues to happen, and the council today is an organisation in transformation, and a different one from the one that failed you all so badly back in June. The Taskforce is satisfied that RBKC, under its new leadership, recognises the challenges it faces and is committed to delivering the recovery for you all. For that reason, they do not see any advantage to a further intervention at this stage, as it would risk further disruption and delay.

But, while some steps have been taken, the report is clear there is a significant need for improvement. The Taskforce has suggested a number of recommendations based on the overall premise that RBKC should continue with their work providing the best possible support to you all. I spoke with the Leader, Councillor Elizabeth Campbell last week and they have accepted these recommendations.

The four key areas highlighted for improvement are:

- **Pace** – the speed of RBKC's delivery needs to be increased and their work done more quickly.

- **Innovation** – RBKC is relying too much on tried-and-tested solutions and they should be bolder in their response.
- **Skills** – too many officers and councillors lack specialist training in working with a traumatised community. This needs to change.
- **Greater empathy and emotional intelligence** – you have all suffered so much, but this has been made worse by bureaucracy that sees boxes being ticked rather than solutions tailored for your needs. The Taskforce was clear – a degree of humanity must be put at the heart of all RBKC’s recovery work.

I agree with these points and I am in no doubt that the leadership and staff of RBKC genuinely want to do better. You may also notice that there is a recommendation for me and my Department to meet with RBKC less often. I have accepted this, however this does not mean my priorities are turning elsewhere or I will not be watching as closely as I was before. It is simply a matter of ensuring RBKC’s time and resources are focused on you all, rather than me.

I have also made it clear to RBKC that this does not mean uncritical or unqualified support from the Government. I expect to see swift, effective action to deal with all the issues highlighted in the report, and I will not hesitate to take further action if they fail to do so.

In the meantime however, I have said previously the Taskforce would stay in place for as long as it was needed. Based on this initial report, there is clearly much to be done. So, the Taskforce will remain in Kensington and Chelsea for the foreseeable future.

I have asked the Taskforce members to ensure that proper action is taken on all fronts they identify, and to report again in the New Year. I am confident that the continued work of the Taskforce will also help ensure that you all receive the support and respect you deserve.

Kind regards,

RT HON SAJID JAVID MP