

# INDEPENDENT GRENFELL RECOVERY TASKFORCE

## SECOND REPORT

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 In developing our second report for the Secretary of State, we are profoundly grateful to many individuals and organisations for taking the time to talk to us about their experience. We have been especially grateful for the many occasions that we have been able to speak to the bereaved, survivors and wider community representatives: their evidence has been invaluable, and their on-going dignity in the face of tragedy and loss is remarkable.
- 1.2 We are grateful too to the many voluntary and statutory groups who have taken time away from their important work to talk to us. Feedback from the bereaved, survivors, the wider community, and the Voluntary Sector are highlighted in this report. We acknowledge also that officers and Councillors from the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) have made every effort to provide the Taskforce with information and keep us abreast of their work.
- 1.3 We have observed that there is a level of community spirit and attachment not often seen in local communities in London. A dynamic and diverse, yet disparate mix of communities has, in the aftermath of 14 June, been forged together, into one with a strong and determined will and commitment to make things better in North Kensington. This presents a rare opportunity for the Council to invest in building the community's social capital, enabling it to exercise a powerful voice in future planning and delivery. We hope this opportunity will be realised.
- 1.4 Since our first report of 31 October 2017 the Taskforce has continued to monitor, challenge and advise RBKC as they seek to deliver a recovery programme following the tragedy of the Grenfell Tower fire on 14 June 2017.
- 1.5 During this period, we have been looking:
- At whether RBKC have delivered against the recommendations made in our first report from October '17
  - For evidence that the Council's strategies, policies and resource allocation has led to measurable outcomes being delivered for bereaved, survivors and wider community.
- 1.6 We consider that RBKC have demonstrated a clear commitment to recovery – many people are working commendably hard on individual workstreams. They have allocated significant resources, and put in place a number of strategies and plans particularly around housing which have given some greater clarity on what is available to bereaved, survivors and wider community. We have also witnessed a clearer focus on implementing new ways of working; creative thinking, driving cultural change across the council, working in partnership with external stakeholders and an increasing degree of candour about the improvements that

still need to be made. We welcome the report from the Centre for Public Scrutiny, CfPS on the review of governance for example and RBKCs response.

1.7 Since 1 November 2017 we have given our best advice to the Council. We note in this report those areas where the Council has acted on our recommendations and other suggestions made in our fortnightly meetings with them. There remain however many areas where we feel that more could be done and faster by the Council, or they have not acted on our advice as we might have wished. Overall, we continue to see a lack of consistency in the quality of service to the bereaved, survivors and wider community. It is therefore our considered view that RBKC has made only limited progress over the period.

1.8 The Taskforce has not seen enough evidence yet that RBKC's commitment, strategies, plans and resources are translating into improved outputs or outcomes for enough bereaved, survivors and the wider community. Converting plans into action and delivery on the ground remains patchy. For example, RBKC has brought together statutory partners in new ways, and plans have and are being refined as a result. Nevertheless this is not yet translating into measurable improvements to services.

1.9 The gulf in trust between the community and the Council also remains a major impediment to progress. We recognise considerable effort has been made by the Council to build a better working relationship with many of the main groups within the affected community. We have also witnessed understandable expressions of anger, distress and frustration. We acknowledge that reconciling the experience reported by the bereaved, survivors and the wider community against the relatively positive reports from RBKC of their actions, has been challenging. We noted the trust deficit as being a major challenge in our first report. That mistrust remains, and it will take many years to change that. Until tangible outcomes begin to be felt by the bereaved, survivors and the wider community, this will continue to be the case.

1.10 The Council and the Government have made available substantial resources to support the response and recovery effort. We have not heard complaints of a lack of resources. However, we have heard complaints of slow response and poorly directed resourcing.

## **INITIAL RECOMMENDATIONS: ASSESSMENT**

1.11 Our assessment of RBKC's progress against the themes identified in the first report is as follows:

- **Pace:** performance in this area is variable. Although strategic commitment is much improved, RBKC needs to inject greater drive into operational delivery. Moving at the pace of the "service user" cannot become a proxy for "taking it slowly". We reiterate our call for greater senior capacity to drive operational delivery now, while strategic plans are put in place.
- **Empathy and Emotional Intelligence:** there is some evidence of improvement. Complaints have reduced but not disappeared. Training is

being provided to front-line officers and Councillors but we still hear of unsympathetic or inappropriate responses from Council staff and Councillors. A development programme will be rolled out for all Councillors from May.

- **Skills:** Trauma support/Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder training has been provided to 154 staff and members<sup>1</sup>. Capacity has been bolstered by the recruitment of respected experienced senior personnel especially in Housing and Communities and People. Key Worker/Support Worker capacity has increased with the recruitment of a further 89 people by December 2017.
- **Innovation:** There are some good examples of innovative thinking and action, but these remain limited.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 RBKC needs to develop a **comprehensive recovery vision** for the bereaved, survivors and the wider community. This needs developing with the local community, and will require much more than the usual “consultation”. RBKC needs to articulate how the Council, with other statutory partners, will achieve better outcomes. This will require 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 in an uncoordinated fashion. The purpose of the comprehensive vision should be to bring the different strands together, work through the inter-dependencies between them and, as RBKC has itself noted, draw on lessons learnt from other disasters. This is an opportunity to consider the full range of social, economic and environmental issues and focus on the medium and longer term. We think this work will set a clear ambition for the bereaved, survivors and the wider community as well as help articulate a collective endeavour for all RBKC staff. It is encouraging that two workshops in early March have begun this process.
- 2.2 Urgent attention is needed on **integrated communications**- making 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.
- 2.3 RBKC needs to review its approach to **partnership working** with the local voluntary sector. The Council needs to move beyond the historical grant giving relationship and develop new and interdependent ways of working, where they listen more to those from the local community, the people who have the trust, confidence and credibility with the local community, and work with them to co-produce a way-forward. Local voluntary and community groups within the area have invaluable knowledge and experience and can help improve how RBKC delivers services. RBKC needs to start working out now how it can work with the local community so that service delivery is strengthened by the community spirit

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<sup>1</sup> Latest figure provided by RBKC.

and willingness we have seen. This will not be easy, will take considerable time, and will require creativity and a genuine willingness to work constructively, built on mutual trust and respect. Where the voluntary sector sees value in RBKC services they will be happy to champion them.

- 2.4 We also recommend that the Council improves their systems for getting and acting on **feedback from frontline workers** in order to improve service delivery as quickly as possible. We have made several suggestions in the body of the report, but we continue to believe that a lack of senior capacity to drive this through remains an issue. Improving the connection between the bereaved, survivors and the wider community and the Council would help drive quicker more effective decision making.
- 2.5 The **Rehousing plans** are paramount to the recovery effort. The Council is pursuing a particular policy and approach (on which we have commented elsewhere in the report). We understand the Council is developing a further approach, within the current policy, to respond to those whose needs are not being met.
- 2.6 RBKC need to ensure there is **proper scrutiny** of decisions relating to Grenfell going forward. We note that scrutiny of decisions continues in other scrutiny committees as relevant to their scope and that these can include those that are Grenfell related. We commend the report from the Centre for Public Scrutiny published on 7 March 2018, and recommend RBKC give serious consideration to their recommendations.

## ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

- 3.1 Since submitting our initial report to the Secretary of State on 31 October 2017 the Taskforce has continued to look across the entirety of development and delivery of RBKC recovery plans. We have also considered whether RBKC has delivered against the recommendations made in our first report. We have more recently focused on whether RBKC strategies, plans and policies are delivering measurable outcomes for the bereaved, survivors and the wider community by meeting and talking to both individuals and their representative groups.
- 3.2 We have met a wide variety of groups and people including the bereaved, survivors, the wider community, voluntary and community groups, RBKC officers at all levels and Councillors. We have met over 21 different groups involved in recovery including residents associations and Grenfell United. We have met a number of the bereaved and survivors individually at the Curve, the FFAC and other places. These add up to over 100 hours of listening observation and discussion. We are profoundly grateful to all those from the local community who have given up their time to speak with us, especially the bereaved, survivors, the wider community, and those groups who represent them and the wider community who have been affected by the tragedy of the 14 June.
- 3.3 All conversations with the Taskforce have been held confidentially to allow people to speak freely. In order to reach the judgements expressed in this report we have

listened carefully to the experiences and opinions of everyone we have met, considered all the available evidence, and come to the views expressed in this report. We have included in this report some quotations, suitably anonymised, which express recurrently heard views of the many people and groups we have met over the past four months. These are not the views of the Taskforce. We have included them in this report as they illustrate areas where we think RBKC has to make progress.

3.4 The issues raised in this report have been subject to on-going discussion with the Council at the highest level. We meet the Leader, Deputy Leader and members of the senior management team on a fortnightly basis to share findings and experiences and offer them on-going support and challenge. We can see that efforts have been made to respond to our thoughts and suggestions. Nevertheless, there are still many aspects that concern us.

## **CONTEXT**

3.5 The Taskforce is aware that recovery to a new kind of normality for the bereaved, survivors and the wider community will take time. It is also recognised that recovery is essentially an individual journey. The Council's role is to provide many of the services and support that will help individuals and groups on that journey. This will also take time and careful forward planning.

3.6 The Council's challenges continue to be manifold. They have had to step up their operational delivery capability as they assumed response and recovery responsibilities from London GOLD in September 2017. On the return of functions to the Council it inherited structures and practices not of its design. This has in some cases presented additional challenges for RBKC. We are aware therefore that the work of RBKC over the past few months will need time to come fully into effect. While we are supportive of the many positive actions that have been taken by RBKC from 1 November, the Grenfell community need to see these translating faster into beneficial outcomes.

3.7 Since 1 November 2017 RBKC has made some progress. The Council demonstrates a clear commitment to wanting to support the bereaved, survivors and the wider community in North Kensington and helping their recovery journey. In pursuit of this, they have worked hard to develop a number of policies and plans designed to support those that have needed them most, and the wider community.

3.8 Nevertheless the translation of this activity into tangible outcomes is inconsistent: therefore our assessment of RBKC's progress against the themes identified in the first report is as follows:

- **Pace:** performance in this area is variable. Although strategic commitment is much improved, overall, RBKC needs to inject greater drive into operational delivery across all areas. Moving at the pace of the "service user" cannot be a proxy for "go slow". While there is merit in giving space and time to people making decisions about their future homes, the Council needs to work harder to understand and anticipate the needs of people, make sure that services are in place to respond quickly and are clear where and how those services will be improved in response to feedback.

- **Empathy and Emotional Intelligence:** there is evidence of improvement. Complaints have reduced but not disappeared. A variety of training has been provided to front-line officers and Councillors but we still hear of unsympathetic or inappropriate responses from council staff and Councillors. Further training is on offer and this is now mandatory for front-line staff. A development programme has been developed for all Councillors, from May.
- **Skills:** Trauma support/PTSD training has been provided. Capacity has been bolstered by recruitment of respected experienced senior personnel especially in Housing and Communities and the People Divisions. Key Worker/Support Worker capacity has increased with the recruitment of a further 89 people by December 2017, though the efficient and effective operational delivery of this support needs further attention.
- **Innovation:** There are some good examples of innovative thinking and action, but these remain limited. For example some key strides have been made to ensure information/data sharing protocols between different statutory providers (RBKC, NHS, CCG, and Police) and voluntary sector providers. However, while the protocol has been signed for some months, it is still not fully operational.

3.9 RBKC continues to invest considerable resource, both financial and staff, to the recovery programme, increasing the number of dedicated staff through intensive recruitment and re-prioritisation and providing community space.

*“My two year old still closes his eyes when walking past the tower. My family and I find comfort at the Curve: we use the facilities and crèche service often to meet with friends. The Staff and services help”*

**Individual**

3.10 We are pleased that RBKC has begun to address silo working. There is evidence of increased, stronger and more constructive partnership working with other statutory bodies, the voluntary sector and local community groups. This is particularly noticeable in the care and support work stream where joint programme boards have been put in place allowing better planning across all delivery agencies. Key initiatives like the Grenfell Education Fund have been well received by partners, particularly the inclusive governance model that underpins it. Health sector partners are responding well to the complexity of need. They have told us that they would benefit from having their voice heard at a more strategic level: we are pleased that since late February they are included at the Strategic Grenfell Response Board. We think that a lot more could be done to learn from partner experience and expertise and ensure there are effective feedback mechanisms that will assist in delivery. The setting up of a quality assurance mechanism which began in January 2018 should help in improving consistency of service in the future.

*“Council officers are more than helpful and often ask us what they can do to help”*

**Voluntary Sector Organisation**

3.11 There is evidence that senior leadership is starting to address some of the underlying issues that will help in delivering long-term recovery. The Chief

Executive has begun to implement plans to make a “deep rooted change of culture, style of working and approach.” Many of the key issues he has identified have been the subject of Taskforce discussions with RBKC’s senior leadership, and we agree the need he has identified to focus on these areas, specifically:

- the need for effective and speedy operational responses;
- a strategic organisational response;
- community led strategies;
- addressing silo working within the Council.

3.12 These plans need to be implemented and embedded across the Council as soon as possible. We acknowledge that this kind of organisational and cultural change inevitably takes time; however in the exceptional circumstances that RBKC finds itself in, it needs to demonstrate equally exceptional drive toward implementation. The challenge for senior officers is to manage performance and continue to motivate and support staff, many of whom are doing exceptional work, to maintain their effort.

3.13 There is some evidence of improved empathy and understanding. A training programme on this has been put in place and is on-going for both Officers and Councillors. RBKC has sought and is taking advice from individuals and organisations with expertise in dealing with the aftermath of tragedy and trauma. We welcome the Council’s commitment to working with the Hillsborough Panel and the reach out and willingness to learn from to Rotherham MBC, facilitated by the LGA. We are pleased that RBKC immediately agreed with our recommendation that they adopt and commit to their own Charter for Families Bereaved through Public Tragedy. We see this as evidence of a less insular approach within the Council.

3.14 We have heard some evidence from a small number of the bereaved and survivors that they are happy with their immediate support from RBKC, including Key Workers, Housing Support staff and others. In addition, there has been a noticeable reduction in this being raised as an issue in our discussions with the bereaved, survivors and wider community.

*“I’ve got a good relationship with my Key Worker – she provides a lot of support”*

**Individual**

*“My health visitor wrote me a letter about what I’ve gone through which meant I could just hand it over to people to read and not go over it all again. It’s made my life a lot easier – I hated having to retell it”*

**Individual**

3.15 But we have also heard that there remains confusion between the role of Key Workers and Support Workers, with evident risks of duplication, when both work under the direction of one department in the Council. This confusion is apparent amongst some of the workers themselves too. Non Council support services have also commented on the confused picture, a lack of coordination and a blockage in getting constructive suggestions taken up by RBKC.

*“Sometimes we have several people<sup>2</sup> wanting to speak to us on the same day.”*

**Lancaster West Residents Association Member**

3.16 We recognise considerable effort has been made in developing a better working relationship with many of the main groups within the affected community. RBKC has worked to develop a more constructive relationship with Grenfell United and other resident groups over the past few months. While this has not translated in to trust of the Council as a public body there is evidence of trust in individuals.

3.17 Attached at annex A is a table setting out our view of RBKC progress against the detailed recommendations in our first report. Below is our assessment on specific work streams. These necessarily build on previous recommendations.

### **GOVERNANCE AND DELIVERY**

3.18 The Council has taken on-board our recommendation to strengthen the scope of the Centre for Public Scrutiny review including what good looks like in relation to the behaviour and performance of Councillors. We commend the CFPS report to RBKC who have committed to looking at their recommendations.

3.19 RBKC set up a Grenfell Recovery Scrutiny Committee, GRSC. We think this was a genuine attempt by the Council to provide a measure of accountability and transparency. We have observed all meetings, and despite good intentions they have not been successful. A recent workshop intended to generate ideas on how it might work better ended in disarray. Nevertheless some very sensible suggestions have been made by the local community which we see as basic good practice, for example, making sure agendas and reports are published well in advance, that reports of the meetings are also circulated extremely quickly and published, a suggestion that more local representatives are co-opted onto the committee, clearly sign-posting all papers, reports from the “front-page” of RBKC website including any actions taken. The recent suggestion of a five hour “drop-in” session with senior officers is welcome as a means for people to raise their concerns directly. However this must not be seen as an alternative to proper scrutiny. Developing proposals to achieve this must be a priority.

3.20 We note that RBKC has taken on board the suggestion of having a level of external objectivity when it comes to dealing with complaints in relation to Grenfell. We welcome their proposal to have an external adjudicator to deal with stage three complaints. We think this potentially will be a service in high demand particularly as it is intended to cover housing allocation decisions, and will need to be well-resourced to cope with that demand effectively.

3.21 The Taskforce has been concerned that the silo –working and the focus on housing has meant there has been little capacity at the senior level to develop and

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<sup>2</sup> Can include: Key Workers, Family Liaison Officers, Housing Officers, Victim Support Workers, Mental Health Support workers

then implement a strategic recovery plan. We have seen little evidence to date of planning for longer term social and economic support.

3.22 We note that RBKC started to address this at the end of January 2018. We support that work and recommend that RBKC develops a recovery vision. We strongly suggest that RBKC develops such a vision with the local community. This would require much more than the usual “consultation”. Separately, and building on individual plans, RBKC should develop their own comprehensive and strategic recovery strategy as a matter of urgency. The strategy 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, the need for collective endeavour, work through the inter-dependencies between them and, as RBKC has noted, draw on lessons learnt from other disasters. This is an opportunity to consider the full range of social, economic and environmental issues and focus on the medium and longer term. We think this work is important: it will set a clear ambition for the bereaved, survivors and the wider community as well as help articulate a collective endeavour for all RBKC staff. We note that workshops in early March are developing this. It is encouraging that senior personnel see the development and implementation of such a plan as a priority. We recommend that it includes areas that have, so far, not been prominent in our discussions with RBKC. In particular in planning for the medium and longer term we would want to see the Council positively incorporate the potential that the social capital suggests; and ensure that social benefits improve the local economy, and employment opportunities, making the area more sustainable for everyone including local businesses.

*“When we think of whether the Council has changed at all, we see the same horse but with a different saddle. That’s all that’s changed”*

**Resident’s Association Member**

3.23 In addition, the capacity at the top of the senior leadership team that can drive through operational change and delivery of outcomes remains a concern. This is not a reflection on current personnel but more an acknowledgement that the challenge of delivering progress for Grenfell Recovery at pace on a wide number of areas is substantial. We reiterate the recommendation from the first report that bolstering capacity to support operational delivery would inject more pace by cutting through the evident hierarchy and delivering faster outcomes.

*“We have not seen evidence of a change. We can see there is activity, but it’s still not evident what is actually changing on the ground. We can understand that plans can take some time to have an effect, but it is now 8 months since the fire and nothing has changed. “*

**Grenfell United**

*“There’s been a shameful waste of resources. We’ve not seen the benefit of the money. Money from Government and donations is (sic) not getting to the people”*

**Lancaster West Residents Association Member**

3.24 A key example is the lack of evidence of effective feedback loops across all work streams that capture individual issues and escalate them quickly to a level where a solution can rapidly be put in place. Far too often we still hear frustration from front line staff who are not clear how their knowledge and experience of working with people on the ground can be used to improve either policy or delivery systems. We also hear many cases, generally around timely communication, where a rapid response from RBKC could have led to a satisfactory outcome. Too often, however, such a response is delayed. Inevitably this compounds the disillusionment about RBKC that is already felt by many. Such support could free the Executive Director of Grenfell Recovery to ensure a more strategic approach is developed with rapid response whenever needed.

## **HOUSING**

3.25 RBKC has committed considerable resource to securing as many properties as possible in their efforts to provide sufficient housing. The fact that RBKC has purchased over 300 properties is a significant achievement. We do not underestimate the challenge or expense of doing this in one of the most expensive areas of London.

3.26 The new supply of purchased property creates the best opportunity thus far to see a step change in the rehousing of residents out of emergency accommodation. However, the target of having all households permanently rehoused by the first anniversary of the tragedy is hugely challenging and unlikely to be met in full.

3.27 RBKC has clearly focussed on addressing the general housing needs of the bereaved, survivors and the wider community. While the numbers of those temporarily and permanently re-housed is going up, the pace has been too slow. We have been concerned about the alignment between the housing on offer and peoples expressed preferences or aspirations. There is evidence that RBKC has adapted policies in response to needs and preferences where they think that they can and are learning lessons as they continue to develop those policies in light of the reality of individual needs.

3.28 RBKC now has a good deal of granular detail which should enable it to more effectively rehouse people. However, it is our view that this has been too slow in coming and this more personalised approach should have been afforded much greater priority from the outset. We understand that RBKC is developing further sophistication in its approach to rehousing those households who remain in emergency accommodation. This will attempt to attend to any households who are not engaging in the current rehousing effort. This is now an urgent requirement and we look forward to scrutinising their approach.

3.29 We recognise that some individuals and families will have complex needs and requirements. Meeting those needs may delay people moving into a new home while modifications are made. It was also to be expected that any newly acquired stock may need some work carried out to make it fully suitable, thus causing some delay. We would recommend that everything is done to make sure that needs in other areas of support- adults, children and social care, are thoroughly understood and integrated into future planning.

- 3.30 The rehousing approach from RBKC shows huge effort; some innovation; but still insufficient evidence of positive outcomes at this stage. Whilst the amount of effort and resource in this area is substantial, the number of households in emergency accommodation is still too high and the numbers permanently rehoused, too low. RBKC has made a number of changes to the approach and the next 6-8 weeks will determine if these have been sufficient to see the step change that is required.
- 3.31 The progress with the transfer of responsibilities from the Tenants Management Organisation (TMO) to the Council has been impressive. Similarly, the work with the Lancaster West residents on the future of the estate and planned physical improvements has been commendable. A recent weekend community planning event has been very well received.
- 3.32 That said there is increasing evidence of dissatisfaction with the rehousing plans and priority for residents of the Walkways. A proposed rehousing policy has only recently been published. The Council will need to play catch-up with meeting the rehousing needs of this section of the community.

*“There is a humanitarian aspect that is lacking. We question why RBKC started buying properties before checking with people what they actually need. They are still not properly matching need. People have said they don’t want to live above the second floor or in a property with only one exit, or with windows that overlook the Tower - so don’t show them properties on the fifth floor or with only one exit or windows that do overlook the Tower.”*

***Grenfell United***

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

- 3.33 We note that the Council has recruited community outreach workers in North Kensington, who seem to be well received by the local community. The Council has in the past appeared to rely on funding voluntary and community groups as their principle means of community engagement. We endorse the support RBKC has given to many voluntary groups – we have seen many examples of exemplary work. For example, the Council’s commitment to fund a diverse and large variety of Supplementary Schools is highly commendable.
- 3.34 However, in the circumstances following the tragedy we feel this approach is limited, and under-developed. Listening to local groups like the numerous Residents’ Associations, the Westway Trust, and many others like them that have their ears very close to the ground would aid the Council’s engagement efforts. We have not seen enough of this. We have noted elsewhere that the Council’s feedback loops with frontline staff need to be improved. We recommend that they also improve their feedback loops with the many excellent Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) groups operating in the area. The Council needs to move beyond the historical grant giving relationship and develop new and interdependent ways of working where they listen more to those from the community, and the people who have their trust, confidence and credibility with local people, and work with them to co-produce the way forward. Local voluntary and community groups within the

area have invaluable knowledge and experience and can help improve how RBKC delivers services. Where those in the voluntary sector see value in RBKC services they will be happy to champion them.

*“Everyone is doing their own community engagement. There’s no plan from above to bring this together – there’s a lack of coordination of messages. And there’s no follow – through. Things are promised and not delivered.”*

***Voluntary Sector Organisation***

3.35 The Council also needs to do much more to establish mechanisms to listen to the views of individuals that can be overlooked. This includes those who are not currently engaged as well as those who may be engaged in a wider residents’ group but may still feel they are not heard. While it will be challenging, there is an opportunity for the Council to develop new ways of working based on the principle of reaching out to the local community in ways that suit them rather than what is easy or convenient for RBKC.

*“We have a good relationship with the Council. But it’s hard to get our views across, they don’t always listen to us, and we’re not sure they pick up on the information about what our communities need.”*

***Voluntary Sector Organisation***

3.36 We have observed that there is a level of community spirit and attachment not often seen in local communities in London. A dynamic and diverse, yet disparate mix of communities has, in the aftermath of 14 June, been forged together, into one with a strong and determined will and commitment to make things better in North Kensington. This presents a rare and key opportunity for the Council to invest in building the community’s social capital, enabling it to exercise a powerful voice in future planning and delivery. The Council should ensure that the Grenfell community becomes the heart and soul of this planning, and not an after-thought. But this will require clear strategic intent and long-term investment. We believe the Chief Executive understands this need and we would expect to see his vision for building social capital in North Kensington embraced across his key personnel.

3.37 Effective communication remains poor with little evidence of clear planning or delivery. We would suggest an integrated over-arching communications plan designed to increase confidence in RBKC’s ability to provide consistent, accurate and up-to-date information both within its own workforce as well as outside the Council. Individual work streams, like housing, care and support, appear to have their own communication plans. We have heard many times that Key/Support Workers often don’t know the latest information coming out from the Council, and often hear it first from the people they are supporting. A more rapid means of making sure that all front-line staff are kept up to date is clearly required to help in providing coherent consistent services. 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. Without this, decision making is both complex and slow.

*“If anything, communication is worse – when they speak to us they don’t understand the estate or the layout.”*

## ***Lancaster West Residents Association Member***

*“RBKC staff don’t know what they can offer. My support worker tries to help but has to keep going back and checking what’s possible.”*

***Individual***

### **CROSS CUTTING SUPPORT**

- 3.38 Specific support for children and young people, including those directly affected by the fire, has on the whole been effective. With few exceptions, young people have been getting therapeutic support, counselling and bespoke additional support where needed. A fast-tracked Child and Adolescent Mental Health Support (CAMHS) referral system has been in place and has worked well. Schools have been effectively supported by the Council and its commissioned service providers. The quality of some volunteer counsellors from Place2Be has been questioned, but this has been relatively rare. The Council’s move to set up the Grenfell Education Fund (GEF), governed by an inclusive local board, has been well received. The GEF provides immediate financial support to schools, but it is also commendably planning longitudinal studies to understand the longer-term impact on traumatised children. The work of the Early Help team has often received praise and their project support like ‘Relaxation Therapy’ has been very well received.
- 3.39 The new Director of Communities and People has begun to redesign the service she inherited. We endorse that work. The numbers of Key Workers has increased. In spite of these good intentions, the picture remains confused and requires urgent attention. Residents are being supported by Key Workers, Support Workers, and in some cases by both. This is alongside other supporter workers like health workers, Police Family Liaison Officers and Victim Support staff. So the intended ‘single point of contact’ approach has not been effectively rolled out yet and is a key concern. We have heard of multiple ‘workers’ arriving at a front door at one time, seemingly oblivious to each other’s plans.
- 3.40 Clearly, some of these workers are doing a very good job, but others are not. Some are very well informed of what support can be provided to people and by when. Others seem to lack either the skills or capability to take a 360-degree view of what support needs to be provided. In addition, it is unclear how much influence and standing these workers have to influence and affect delivery, including pace and personalisation. Without doubt, a much better means of keeping all front-line staff informed is required. We have heard that social media is no longer being used for rapid information sharing or myth busting for example.
- 3.41 Ensuring minimum standards of service delivery remains a challenge. While new quality assurance systems have been put in place on the care and support workstream we still hear, too often, of poor or inconsistent standards in practice. RBKC evidences a desire for consistent, standard and equitable strategies and policies. This sounds reasonable. We are concerned that in practice the application of these strategies does not come at the cost of personalisation where that would deliver better outcomes for individuals. There appears little evidence of effective application of discretion in exceptional circumstances.

*“Someone from Care for Grenfell said - if you were really suffering you’d have called sooner. “*

***Lancaster West Residents Association Member***

*“It feels as though (the Council believes) there is a set period to grieve, and you get a set period of empathy and this translates into a set period of what you’re entitled to.”*

***Local Residents Panel Member***

3.42 RBKC understands that many people in the affected community have no or very little trust in the Council, and is realistic that changing this will take time and they may never win everyone over. Nevertheless, we remain concerned that RBKC is not clearly demonstrating that addressing this trust deficit will require long-term sustained effort and wider social and economic support.

## **NEXT STEPS**

4. The Taskforce will continue to monitor how RBKC strategies, plans and policies are delivering measurable outcomes that support the bereaved, survivors and the wider community in their recovery journey. Given the time that has elapsed since the tragic fire, RBKC needs to prove over the coming months that they can translate their good intentions into the support that is still needed.

4.1 We have considered when our next report will be most useful to you. We would suggest, in light of local government elections to be held in May, that our next report is presented in the late summer - early autumn. This will give some time for any new Councillors to influence the working of the Council following their election. We would like to give any new Councillors sufficient time for their contribution to take effect. The one year anniversary of the tragedy will be a difficult and emotional time for many. We would not wish to add any further pressure, however inadvertent, to the bereaved, survivors and the local community.

## 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	<b>In train</b> Recommendation has been incorporated into the scope of the CfPS review who reported on 7 March. We commend the CfPS report to RBKC.
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	<b>Variable but overall poor.</b> RBKC have put in place a number of experienced senior managers to bolster management structures. However this is not yet translating into improved pace of delivery on a consistent basis. Communications and community engagement remains a concern with report of inconsistent messaging and errors in support publications.
3	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	<b>Achieved</b>
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	<b>Improving</b> There has been intensive work on provision of supply and changes have been made to policies. There are some encouraging signs but these have not made as much impact on actual re-housing as we would like.
5.	Housing Management: the future management and ownership of the Council's housing stock should not be pre-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	June 2018	<b>Good</b> Initial progress was slow but pace has increased more recently. The announcement by the TMO of the intention to hand back services to the Council is a significant turning point and a welcome step change.

	be required.		
6.	<b>Lancaster West Estate:</b> 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	<b>In train</b> Consultation events have occurred designed with local residents. These have been well received and plans are moving forward.
<b>Community Engagement</b>			
7.	<b>Care for Grenfell:</b> 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	<b>Variable</b> Considerable effort has been put into recruitment of sufficient staff; however the outcomes remain variable and dependent on other aspects of recovery planning. Further work needs to be done to ensure that services are better joined up.
8	<b>Prioritisation:</b> 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	<b>Variable</b> We have seen little evidence that RBKC is effectively delivering “quick wins”. As an example we noted that the handbook of services for those affected by the fire and A-Z of voluntary sector support took 3-4 months to deliver and included errors when it was.
9.	<b>Community Engagement:</b> 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	<b>Variable</b> Community engagement is included in all programme boards as an agenda item. Evidence that all relevant areas of RBKC have a comprehensive understanding of the local community is insufficient. The Taskforce have passed on individual cases some of which are known to senior managers and some not.
<b>Cross- cutting</b>			
10	<b>Working holistically:</b> 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	<b>Variable</b> An innovative information sharing protocol has been signed by an impressive number of partners, both statutory and non-statutory. However this is not fully operational as yet though promised by the end of January 2018. The issue of silo-working is addressed specifically in the report from the Chief Executive “RBKC: Fit for New Purposes”.

11.	<b>Personalised Key Workers:</b> need to 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	<b>Variable</b> Numbers of Key workers have been increased, a quality assurance system to ensure consistent levels of service delivery has been put in place, but there remain areas for improvement. RBKC have a good understanding of the on-going challenges in this area which engenders some confidence they will deliver. However picture of who does what remains confused.
12.	<b>Improving support and empathy:</b> 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	<b>In train</b> Training has been provided to 145 frontline staff following advice from NHS and CNWL covering PTSD and Trauma awareness. Further training is being rolled out in 2018. Councillors were also offered training in October and November with 9 attendees to date. Further two sessions will be offered for those unable to attend previous sessions and will be included in induction for new Councillors. Training is being improved to include Faith and Culture. RBKC have adopted the Charter suggested by the Hillsborough Panel and are working with them to ensure lessons learnt are embedded.
<b>The Site</b>			
13	<b>Covering the Tower:</b> 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	<b>Not the responsibility of RBKC</b> It remains the Taskforce view that the physical impact of the uncovered Tower has a significant detrimental effect on the ability of the local community to begin their own recovery.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FEBRUARY 2018

	RECOMMENDATION	BY WHEN
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.
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
16	<p>RBKC needs to develop a recovery vision for the bereaved, survivors and the wider community. We strongly suggest that RBKC develop such a plan <b>with</b> the local community. This would require much more than the usual “consultation”.</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>	End September
17	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 Councillors need to act on that feedback constructively and swiftly to improve service delivery.	By end May
18	RBKC needs to listen more to those who have the trust and confidence of the local community and act on their	From March 2018

	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.	and on-going.
<b>19</b>	RBKC needs to start working out <b>now</b> 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
<b>21</b>	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