

Recommendation from External Scrutiny Team

Initial assessment of whether the two consultations on future support are effective and restorative processes

29 May 2024 - Involve & Collaborate CIC

This is an initial summary report to inform the council leadership team's decision on progressing the Grenfell Future Support Programme models. It will be followed by a final report which details our consultation scrutiny process and findings in more detail.

What is the required assessment from the External Scrutiny Team (EST)?

In our terms of reference we were asked to scrutinise whether the consultation process, for both the bereaved and survivor and immediate community consultations, were effective, and to pay particular attention to the following:

- The weighting of different voices
- The methods used to reach out to all eligible groups and individuals
- The collection and analysis of data and the use of feedback
- The robustness of analysis and interpretation
- Ensuring the final proposals adequately reflect the feedback
- Assess strengths and weaknesses of the whole consultation
- The allocation of funding across the three budgets (bereaved and survivors, immediate community, education and training)

We have addressed all these areas in our judgement below.

We have used four principles of effective consultation which we set out in our first report: fairness, accountability, transparency, integrity. We also considered how far the consultation has been both trauma-informed and restorative.

The role of EST was not to judge the specific division of funds between different bereaved and survivors and immediate community members, but to ensure that the process of consultation, analysis, and development of the models followed good practice for a consultation, and that the overall consultation process, in particular the design of surveys and facilitation of sessions about these models was trauma-informed, and created space for a robust and restorative dialogue between the Grenfell Partnerships Team (GPT) and those being consulted; both bereaved and survivors and the immediate community.

There is one area to caveat: we are not able to say definitively whether or not the final proposals adequately reflect *all* the feedback received. It was not within the scope of our role to run the consultation, conduct thorough analysis of all the consultation data or look at all of the information about support services that GPT have collected over the past seven years. We have scrutinised a proportionate sample of the feedback, not every piece of feedback, so we are not able to ascertain how every piece has been used. We have reported based on all the feedback we have seen, both through formal observation and data sampling of analysis.

Assessments in summary

Bereaved and Survivors consultation

Having scrutinised the consultation process, the EST is satisfied that it was an effective and trauma-informed consultation, when assessed against the four principles we have used (transparency, fairness, integrity, accountability). Given the context around the consultation, and historic relationships with the bereaved and survivors, a fully restorative process would not be possible at this time. However, the process of the consultation has made significant steps in restorative practice. Based on our agreed model of observing a high proportion of consultation events, sampling the questionnaire analysis data, and reviewing all questions and reports, the EST agrees that the proposed model adequately reflects the feedback received through the consultation.

Immediate community consultation

Having scrutinised the consultation process, the EST is satisfied that it was an effective and trauma-informed consultation, when assessed against the four principles we have used (transparency, fairness, integrity, accountability). The process of the consultation has also made some important steps in restorative practice.

We note that some members of the immediate community are concerned about the levels of community response to this consultation. Based on the data that we have been provided, we consider the level of response to be adequate and note the council's efforts to encourage engagement through a wide range of methods. The level of engagement, in the context of restoring trust between the community and the council, is a key indicator that the restorative process between council and community is at an early stage and will require more engagement during the implementation phase as well as action by the wider council.

Based on our agreed model of observing a high proportion of consultation events, sampling the questionnaire analysis data, and reviewing all questions and reports, the EST agrees that the proposed model adequately reflects the feedback received through the consultation.

Overall

We are happy for the development of both models to be presented to the council leadership team as they stand. For formal confirmation in our detailed final report that we are satisfied with the consultation process, there are some more steps we would require, as outlined in the sections below.

In terms of timing, we are not expecting the council to provide us with additional commitments before the June leadership meeting, because commitments from the wider council will need some time to understand and plan. However, we would like to agree a timeline for how this will be addressed so that we can later confirm formally our recognition of this consultation and publish a report to that effect.

Bereaved and Survivor Consultation

Overall Assessment

We are satisfied sufficiently in the consultation process to recommend that the council proceeds with developing the support package, based on the final models sent to us on 20th May 2024.

We confirm that the B&S consultation process has so far met our four principles for effective consultation (fairness, accountability, transparency, integrity).

However, in order to formally recognise the consultation also as a trauma-informed and restorative process in our detailed final report, we are asking for: evidence of commitment from the wider council, which goes beyond GPT, in addressing systemic issues which challenge restorative practices and relationships and which continue unhelpful power dynamics which can cause harm to bereaved and survivors.

Strengths of the consultation process

- **The staging of the consultation process took enough time to be inclusive** - in particular, an over-ambitious time frame at the start was amended, more stages of iterative feedback were included, and some additional time for sense making was included.
- **Through the process of the consultation, the running of face to face and hybrid meetings steadily improved.** We see this as down to:
 - The addition of external facilitation, on our recommendation
 - The shift in mindset within the GPT; from spending time accepting feedback and hearing trauma replayed, to finding restorative ways to bring the tradeoffs and needs of the consultation into meetings.
 - Preparing and planning meetings better, asking for commitment from groups to keep to time, and hold to the agenda and purpose of meetings better so that people were less likely to be re-traumatised by the meeting itself.
- **Additional meetings were added on request** with groups that felt their voices, views or needs were under-represented in the proposed models. We commend GPT for responding positively to these requests and for listening carefully to these views and representations. We are aware of occasions when the proposed models were iterated in response.
- **Quantitative data was collected and analysed in a professional and systematic manner.** In particular, the GPT took on our feedback to complete all analysis of the questionnaire data before developing models, go into more detail and increase rigour on coding and theming.
- **Voices were weighted accurately.** We are confident that no one cohort or group has been given greater weight than another in the information gathering process. The final phase 4 analysis, for example, clarifies the split by cohort carefully. We observed during face to face sessions and in the planning of meetings that the GPT were careful to acknowledge not only the requirement to engage with those who wanted to engage,

but with groups who might have less capacity to do so. We heard active expressions of care over intersectional issues like gender, cultural, and language barriers.

- **GPT additionally drew on other data sources (e.g. trauma and disaster recovery expertise, insights from case work) to inform, check and refine the development of the models**, particularly in instances where bereaved and survivors expressed different views and preferences.
- **Full analysis of the first phase was shared transparently.** And the final model documents also represent a transparent summary of how final decisions have been made, which we understand will be shared.
- **The interpretation of the range of views we heard, and the way these were translated into the models, appeared to be reasonable and balanced.** Overall the process for aligning feedback to reach final models was effective, including when the feedback contained some challenging and conflicting needs expressed by different groups and coming from spaces of trauma and harm done in the past. GPT were transparent about why and how feedback helped shape the final models and in some cases how and why the models did not change.
- **The final models take the support to a more restorative place.** Feedback suggested that all groups wanted more choice and flexibility, but this looks different for different people. The final models took this on board and refocused the framing of the support to be *based on people's needs now*, rather than on *what experience they had during the fire*.

Weaknesses of the consultation process

A quick turnaround between consultation data collection and preparing the next stage of models could lead to lack of transparency

The requirement to continue support without a service gap led to the stages of the consultation needing to happen at pace. The timelines which were shortest appeared to us to be those for synthesising feedback, sensemaking and producing models. There was good justification for keeping to time, and we are satisfied that all the stages of the consultation were carried through with due attention. However, it led to a tension felt both in GPT and in the External Scrutiny Team. This was that by slowing down we might create harm in missing deadlines for support, and we might also lose the trust of some people who simply wanted the consultation to be over. However, in proceeding at pace we were losing some transparency in both the consultation data analysis and in the scrutiny of the consultation.

Ultimately, we judged it most important to allow the models to proceed; we prioritised this above a requirement for the council to slow down and provide full transparency at every stage.

We have also worked at pace, and have been conducting observations, reviewing final models, and reviewing facilitation plans for the education engagement sessions, alongside producing this report.

We have assessed the bereaved and survivor consultation as effective (the assessment for the education and training model follows later) and have prioritised making and sharing this summary assessment so that the models can proceed towards implementation.

We note however that we will share our fuller, more detailed reasoning for this assessment as soon as possible; and we will provide a timeline for this as soon as the wider timeline is clarified.

Additional commitment required: GPT should manage expectations with bereaved and survivors about to what extent they are able to act on any feedback received about the final programme model itself. GPT to share any feedback received on the final models with us so that this can inform the design of the ongoing monitoring and scrutiny arrangements.

The consultation was not wholly restorative, (and could not have been).

The timing of the criminal trial, the questions around the future of the tower, the historic injustices that have been experienced by different groups, and existing tensions between some bereaved and survivor groups all made it very difficult for this consultation to be wholly restorative.

We would ideally have liked to see more facilitated dialogue between different cohorts to deepen understanding and empathy and lessen tensions and conflicts. We appreciate that due to the levels of ongoing trauma and disagreements, the consultation has not been able to go as far in this direction as would have been ideal.

We recognise that this is not down to poor consultation design but to external factors - and the learning is a wider learning for the council, not for the GPT or this consultation alone.

We saw good progress towards restorative practice in the way that the council learned and developed during the consultation and would commend the GPT in particular for changes made towards more restorative ways of working as the consultation progressed.

The decision to retain the lawyers' recommendation for the weighting of funding pots against the different areas.

GPT took the decision early on to not change the lawyers' indicative weightings as they felt that opening up the allocation for debate was likely to raise tensions and conflicts in ways which were not supportive of a restorative or trauma informed approach. We can see that in the context of this consultation, opening up this question would not have been restorative and could have been re-traumatising and divisive. However, we think GPT should have communicated the reasons for their decision to move from indicative to set funding allocations more transparently.

Areas where we seek further commitment to ongoing restorative practice from the council

We are aware that although the process has been restorative for some, for others the final model has set back relationships with the Council. In the final model consultation data, there are some respondents who are still very dissatisfied with the final model.

Additional commitment required: Given that the process has not been experienced as restorative by all, we recommend further engagement with those who are dissatisfied and have found this process triggering and harmful. Part of this will be about the Grenfell Partnerships Team working to repair relationships that have been negatively affected by this process.

In addition, we see a need for the wider council to acknowledge some of the harms that bereaved and survivors still suffer in their relationship with the council, and that this programme will not address all their issues. This includes an ongoing and reinforced commitment from the wider council to acknowledge and address Grenfell-related challenges that people face that are outside the scope of this programme, for example housing. (See more on this in the Final Requirements section below.)

Immediate community Consultation

Overall Assessment

We are satisfied sufficiently in the consultation process to recommend that the council proceeds with exploring how the model, as it stands, could be implemented. This is based on the model sent to us on 20th May 2024.

EST is satisfied that it was an effective and trauma-informed consultation, when assessed against the four principles we have used (transparency, fairness, integrity, accountability). The process of the consultation has also made some important steps in restorative practice.

We note that some members of the immediate community are concerned about the levels of community response to this consultation. Based on the data that we have been provided, we consider the level of response to be adequate and note the council's efforts to encourage engagement through a wide range of methods. The level of engagement, in the context of restoring trust between the community and the council, is a key indicator that the restorative process between council and community is at an early stage and will require more engagement during the implementation phase as well as action by the wider Council.

Based on our agreed model of observing a high proportion of consultation events, sampling the questionnaire analysis, and reviewing all questions and reports, the EST agrees that the proposed model adequately reflects the feedback received through the consultation.

We are prepared to sign off the community consultation *up to phase 4*; but in order to be an effective and restorative consultation, the following additional commitments (see below) should be actioned during the next phase of preparing for implementation.

Strengths of the consultation process

- **The staging of the consultation process was amended to allow for greater engagement.** In particular, an over ambitious time frame at the start was amended, more stages of iterative feedback were included, and some additional time for sense making was included.

- **The interpretation of the range of views we heard, and the way these were translated into the models, appeared to be reasonable and balanced. Voices were weighted accurately.** We caveat though with the relatively small numbers who took part.
- **Quantitative data was collected and analysed in a professional and systematic manner.** In particular, the GPT took on our feedback to complete all analysis of the questionnaire data before developing models, go into more detail and rigour on coding and theming.
- **Full analysis of the first phase was shared transparently** and the feedback on the final models is also clear and transparent.
- **The GPT have made proportionate efforts to reach out to people to take part.** We acknowledge the way the team has built on learning and tried new approaches. We recognise the broader systemic issues for example consultation fatigue, lack of trust, and the lack of awareness of the potential support in the community beforehand / belief that there will be any support provided.
- **Changes made to questionnaires made the questions more asset based** which was important for the community
- **Through the process of the consultation, the running of face to face and hybrid meetings steadily improved.** As we have noted with the bereaved and survivor consultation, the facilitation and ability to engage has improved. We have seen the seeds of working, together with immediate community members in dialogue about the consultation, and sharing the responsibility for co-creation with them. We have started to see council colleagues and immediate community members getting used to a new form of dialogue and we recommend that this approach continues.
- **There were high levels of agreement with the final model in the Phase 4 consultation** demonstrating high support for the model from those that did respond.
- **The final model demonstrates an awareness of the broader systemic issues at play** Both advocacy and engagement strands of the model are clearly there to help address broader issues people experience with the council.
- **Council colleagues' presentations and use of slide materials became clearer and more accessible even though the information was complex.** The presentations became a more useful guide to steer the conversations and were a key feature of the transparency of the later stages.

Weaknesses of the consultation process

- **It has been very hard to achieve higher than average response rates, although response rates have been broadly in line with other council consultations.** Nevertheless, because there has been relatively low engagement overall, we have an overarching question about the extent to which the final model reflects the breadth of needs of the immediate community; we also are concerned that the consultation may not increase trust between community members and the council. We appreciate that this was difficult due to a range of (not wholly understood) factors, including consultation fatigue and lack of trust in the wider council.

- **We would have liked to see more detailed breakdowns** of total respondents by age, ethnicity, etc. We recognise that sometimes collecting this data can be impossible during less formal engagement processes and so we would have liked to see a statement from GPT as to their overall experience and sense of who engaged, any sections of the immediate community that were under-represented during the entire consultation process and how they went about targeting under-represented groups.
- **Consultation meetings that we observed at various stages were sometimes too unstructured and failed to elicit enough in depth feedback** from participants or engage them in meaningful discussion of trade-offs or choices. Again, we appreciate that in the specific context of this consultation, participants often needed to tell their stories and vent their anger at past failings of the council; over the period of the consultation meetings did become better structured and more effective, with facilitation becoming more considered and confident and a better mix of time spent in looking backwards and exploring future options.
- **The final phase was compressed;** given the necessary deadlines, expanding the duration of earlier phases has led to compression of the final phase, when ideally there would have been more time for refinement and for checking back with different stakeholder groups.

Additional commitment required

- **We want to see plans for the implementation phase, with a commitment to significant additional resident involvement and details as to how this will be done.** There should be targeted outreach with people who are less likely to engage with all the types of support currently recommended.
- **We would like the council fully to support the implementation group.** In this process, this should be run as a codesign process or at least offer this option of establishing a codesign group or a process that includes exploring tradeoffs.
- **We would like the council to take more time over the implementation stage** and develop a plan for how the model should be implemented and amended over the first year of its use. This should be co-created as a plan with immediate community members where possible, coordinated with the development of new scrutiny and monitoring arrangements, and fully implementing these once developed.

Final requirements for both consultations to be trauma-informed and restorative

We would like to see a commitment from the council to acting in a restorative way with its staff, residents and stakeholders, beyond the specifics of this consultation. There are three broad areas.

1) The way the council treats people across the board in provision of services

The feedback we heard often centred on people's broader experience of the council. No matter how restorative the consultations are, the restorative process for bereaved, survivors and the

community will not be realised unless the council commits to broader restorative working across its practice. A failure to do this would undermine the efficacy of the consultation and limit the long term benefits of the Grenfell Future Support Programme, as well as limit the programme's potential to help enable a long term shift towards more restorative relationships.

Additional commitment required:

- **More person-centred approaches;** considering how to make services fit together better and support the wider determinants of health and wellbeing. We heard feedback about experiences of poor services which meant people were unable to engage with future support in an atmosphere of trust.

2) The way the council connects with and trusts residents

One of the biggest themes that came up across both consultations was a sense that the wider council is not visible enough locally and does not trust residents, listen or welcome challenge. This is not about being open all the time to criticism, but embarking on more restorative relationship building.

Additional commitment required:

- **Senior level engagement with the consultation and the future support service.** We would like to see cross-council commitment to truly restorative processes in future, and greater senior visibility in ensuring this commitment is actioned. This should include colleagues across the council, including in key services such as housing. This is likely to require some ongoing training or coaching to support development of capacity within the council. There is an opportunity here to enable the success of the Grenfell Future Support Programme, especially with the community advocacy team engaging with wider council services.
- **More embedded participatory approaches in the council.** Other councils, for example Camden, Croydon, Westminster, Hackney and Test Valley, are proactive in engaging their communities in exploring tradeoffs across a range of policy areas. We know that RBKC has explored this, for example, as a member of the Local Climate Engagement Coaching group; and we would like to understand how far the council is considering a joined up approach to participation. We suggest that some attention here would ensure that Grenfell-related support feels more easily held in the council as a whole.

3) The way the wider council connects with and supports the GPT

Our perception is that GPT has been asked by the council to take responsibility for “being restorative”. However, our understanding of restorative and trauma-informed practice tells us that the requirement for *one team* within the council (the GPT) to behave in a restorative fashion - in a context where outstanding injustices were still at play and where other areas of the council were not operating in this way - places an incredibly high and unrealistic burden on the team. We are not saying here that we see any performance issues with the way the GPT team ran this consultation. We commend the team for their dedicated and skilled work, which we have seen.

Additional commitment required:

- **Senior level council officer engagement with the findings of the consultation and the future support service**, with cross-council commitment to truly restorative processes in future. This means commitment to restorative work is seen as a whole-council project, and the work of GPT is supported and enabled as part of this. This should involve plans for the council to continue to learn and embed these ways of working, within GPT and across the council more widely.