



Proposal, North Kensington Recovery Group

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Prepared for: RBKC - Governance Review

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The authors are grateful to those behind the Notting Dale Strategic Partnership Board for sharing their work.

Who are Grenfell Network Group ?

The Grenfell Network Group is a collaboration of residents, councillors and voluntary agencies which emerged from a meeting organized by Kensington and Chelsea Social Council in the weeks following the horrific fire at Grenfell Tower. It meets to share ideas and issues related to the North Kensington recovery, invites speakers and facilitates the development of local capacity to feed into democratic processes.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Objective

- To provide a solid foundation for a community-led recovery within the five wards of North Kensington, and a model for increased public participation in decision-making across Kensington & Chelsea

Goals

- To achieve a high level of community participation in decision making in the borough
- To assist in attaining a long term, sustainable recovery for North Kensington in line with the expressed wishes of its community
- To help reconcile the Council with the residents it exists to serve
- To implement Asset-Based Community Development in North Kensington, making the most of its people, its history, and its many other local resources

Solution

- To cede the Recovery to the community, so that the community consults on how the Council can help to deliver the wishes of the community. A 180° turn in decision making

Project Outline

- A series of thematic groups in loose alignment with the themes and ideas section of the recently published "Grenfell Recovery Strategy"
 - Local residents will be supported to populate these groups, alongside ward councillors, representatives of voluntary sector organisations and local businesses. Here they will deal with issues at the heart of the Recovery such as mental health and well-being, housing, community assets, etc. Each group member will bring local intelligence about the needs of their own street, block, client group, etc.
 - There will be a larger aggregated meeting of delegates from each thematic group – this is the North Kensington Recovery Group. The NKRK will consider proposals from each thematic group, prioritise them and allocate resources in line with their priorities. Institutions with statutory duties towards local people - including RBKC, the police, and the West London Clinical Commissioning Group – will have the opportunity to advise and support local people taking part in the process.
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Putting people in control of the places they live:

- Of budgets, public investment and decision-making
 - Of designing, delivering and improving the services they need and value. Any strategy must secure a positive environment for change (systems, opportunities, and institutions that facilitate popular decision-making, rather than opposing or avoiding it) AND enable and empower the local population to take advantage of it (by securing the time, resources, skills and knowledge required)
 - RBKC can exercise exactly as much formal control over the North Kensington Recovery Group and budget as that group has over RBKC decisions and budgets. For example, if RBKC “consults” with the population on its own strategy and budget then the NKRK should “consult” with RBKC on its
 - Councillors are residents and can be delegates just as any other resident
 - This is a big piece of work and needs properly resourced, dedicated expertise to organize. It should include a strength-based assessment of the skills, knowledge and connections already present. RBKC officers should be part of the bank of external experts that NKRK can call on to ensure their work is well planned and effective
 - Any proposal to improve local governance must show that it would have helped to avoid the fire by facilitating the local control that allowed the accurate warnings of residents to be over-ridden
 - The model assumes that the NKRK has direct control over a substantial recovery budget. It is made up of delegates from its sub-groups who must each be a resident. These sub-groups are thematic – with themes chosen that reflect current strategic recovery priorities, informed by the work done to establish popular priorities by the RBKC Community Engagement team
 - The thematic sub-groups are themselves made up of delegates from the key stakeholders for that theme. The requirement that only residents may be delegated to the NKRK means that there must be at least one resident on each of the sub-groups, and that the residents who act as delegates are supported to develop and maintain the skills and capabilities needed to both understand and communicate the work of their sub-group. In practice it will be necessary for these sub-groups to have multiple enabled residents on them in order to ensure that individual absence doesn't prevent them advocating for the sub-group's priorities or reporting back on NKRK actions to their sub-groups
 - The NKRK sets recovery priorities and allocates resources. It delegates to expert thematic sub-groups the design and delivery of its priorities. These designs originate with those sub-groups and are brought to the NKRK for consideration by resident delegates from those sub-
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groups. Having residents as the sole delegates helps to ensure longer-term thinking and a focus on the issues that matter most to local people – professionals are more mobile, and it is easier for them to avoid the consequences of short-termism than is the case for many of the people who live in North Kensington

- This proposal deliberately avoids suggesting sub-groups based on personal characteristics, for example, older or younger people, people of particular faiths, and so on. This approach has been taken to discourage the creation of barriers or silos based on these characteristics. A proactive approach to equality and diversity is anticipated, such that collective decision-making bodies both reflect the diversity of the local population and commit to processes of development that ensure that diversity is recognised and valued.
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Community Safety



A link in with Safer Neighbourhood Panels across the Five wards.

Care



How we ensure that we have the ingredients to look after our most vulnerable residents, including children and disabled people.

Subsistence



Ensuring universal continuous access to a secure home, a nutritious diet, communication and transport



North Kensington Recovery Group

Each group fosters discussions, ideas and proposals which are forwarded to the Recovery Group to be acknowledged, debated if necessary and passed as a resolution for the Council, CCG or others to consider. If budgets are devolved decisions on expenditure can be made here.

Health & Wellbeing



Both the narrower sense in which we use health services, and the broader sense by which we reduce our need for health services by looking after ourselves and each other

Assets



Bringing those who are interested in the assets based in the community together to maximise resources and create a strength-based recovery across the five wards.

Skills



Includes the development of all the skills people need for a fulfilling life in a vibrant community, from literacy and numeracy, budgeting and cooking, assertiveness and critical thinking, healthy relationships and participation