

## **PRESENT**

### **Committee Members**

Cllr Mary Weale (Chair)  
Cllr Will Pascall (Vice-Chair)  
Cllr Tom Bennett, (Chair, Environment Select Committee)  
Cllr Gregory Hammond, (Vice-Chair, Housing & Communities Select Committee)  
Cllr Walaa Idris, (Chair, Family Services Select Committee)  
Cllr Dahabo Isse  
Cllr Lucy Knight, (Chair, Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee)  
Cllr Claire Simmons, (Chair, Housing and Communities Select Committee)  
Cllr Sidney Yankson

### **Others Present**

Cllr Elizabeth Campbell, Leader of the Council  
Cllr Johnny Thalassites, Lead Member for Finance, Customer Services & Net Zero Council

### **Council Officers**

Sophie Evans, Director of Customer Delivery  
Jacqui Hird, Scrutiny Manager  
Maxine Holdsworth, Chief Executive  
Callum Southern, Governance Officer  
Callum Wilson, Strategic Director of Grenfell Partnerships and Corporate Transformation

## **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for Absence were received by Cllr Thaxter.

Apologies for lateness were received by Cllr Isse.

## **2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made.

## **3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 February 2024 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

## **4 UPDATE ON SAVINGS AND TRANSFORMATION**

The Chair invited the Lead Member for Finance, Customer Services and Net Zero Council, Cllr Johnny Thalassites, supported by Chief Executive, Maxine Holdsworth, Callum Wilson, Strategic Director for Grenfell Partnerships, Communities and Corporate Transformation, and Sophie Evans, Director of Customer Delivery to introduce the report:

The Committee:

- 4.1 Asked what was meant by transformation in relation to the organisation's working culture. The Lead Member confirmed transformations targeted becoming the best Council through efficiencies and better service to residents despite financial headwinds. Officers embraced better business process efficiencies rather than relying on traditional savings cuts and programme delays. Officers indicated that transformation and savings could not be carried out at the same time. Work was beginning to look at whether some vacancies needed to be filled, so tests could take place as to whether outcomes could be achieved differently.
- 4.2 Asked if cuts and programme slippage were not enough to bring about transformation. Officers agreed they were not and accepted the concern that the report did not provide clearly worked, costed, examples of beneficial transformation opportunities.
- 4.3 Asked why the Council was continuing to recruit given it had a higher staff to resident ratio than other London local authorities. Officers indicated that if recruitment was immediately halted, it would potentially expose services to the risk of service reduction. The Lead Member highlighted there were some areas of the Council that were more complex and noted that if you looked at outstanding areas of performance at the Council, other areas had a lower ratio of caseloads per social worker.
- 4.4 Sought clarity on why staff surpluses were difficult to identify in departments. Officers noted an example was the recent disaggregation of Digital Services from Westminster where, despite a need to reduce the number of people in the department, they were heavily involved in the ERP implementation.
- 4.5 Indicated that staff reductions would be better focused on support staff and highlighted the need for more detail. The Lead Member reassured that the intention was not to rationalise frontline staff. Officers noted that the new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system would improve analytics and provided a self-serve function that would enable a reduction in support staff. It was also highlighted that a change in service delivery would require a staff consultation and operational buildings could also be used slightly differently to produce savings. The focus was primarily on exploring inefficiencies and processes rather than individual staff.
- 4.6 Sought reassurance that the impact on service delivery of staff reductions, especially in housing and licensing, was being monitored and noted the need for monitoring pre and post transformation. Officers explained that an Equalities Impact Assessment had to be performed in response to any restructure looking at the impact on residents and expressed the importance of reviewing restructures once they had been completed.

- 4.7 Expressed concerns about licensing and highlighted an action from Licensing Committee on 12 March 2024 related to staffing and recruitment. Officers indicated they would follow this up.

**Action by:** Governance Officer

- 4.8 Highlighted that Housing Needs was an area where the staffing to resident ratio was not healthy compared to other areas and suggested a good transformation programme could be an opportunity to invest in areas of high need.
- 4.9 Asked whether there were specialists in place to drive digital transformation who were less risk adverse. Officers highlighted that the principle as part of the Digital Strategy was to use the correct mechanisms available, ensure they're right for the job and easy to maintain. The Committee was also informed that Officers were examining other local authorities who were carrying out implementations and using new technology to examine best practices and reduce risk.
- 4.10 Suggested that the figures on the worst-case scenario on the budget gap had not considered the possibility of demand-led services continuing to grow and what the figures would be if they were higher. The Lead Member indicated the figures provided were there to express reasonable outcomes and there was a judgement to be made about how likely aggravating factors such as a sharp rise in inflation were. The additional social care grant was currently the biggest known variable.
- 4.11 Asked what risks were concerning Lead Members and Officers. The Lead Member expressed his concern over temporary accommodation as there was a difficult upsurge which was contributing to a £3m overspend.
- 4.12 Discussed how the Council could put service users, carers, and families at the heart of the transformation. Officers that the paper had tried to acknowledge the different experiences residents had and it was important the transformation examined how services could better serve residents.
- 4.13 Asked whether there would be more pilots on an outcomes-focused approach in relation to the revised Homecare model. Officers confirmed there would and it needed to be examined how digital platforms could be used while considering resident experiences.
- 4.14 Asked if departments across Adult Social Care & Public Health were closely monitoring £12.5m of savings being delivered. Officers confirmed this was the case and quarterly outturn monitoring reports would demonstrate whether savings were on track.
- 4.15 Asked where the learning from Grenfell had been formally pulled together in one document and suggested that the principles that stemmed from the learning should be made explicit in the paper. Officers acknowledged it existed in different reports and suggested the learning was embedded in the paper. Officers also confirmed that the learning had been translated into tangible

actions and was being embedded into the way the organisation worked, as shown by the co-produced service standards which were being rolled out through an implementation plan.

- 4.16 Cautioned that general provision, intermediary, and severe needs need to be balanced as insufficient investment could create greater need and expense.
- 4.17 Suggested there were not a clear set of principles for future transformation and better articulation of these and significantly more detail would make the process more evident; the budget transformation process also needed to be accelerated.
- 4.18 Noted that a further update on progress of the Transformations Programme to enable the Council in its commitment to becoming the best would be brought to the June meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

**Action by:** *Scrutiny Manager*

The Chair thanked the Lead Member, the Chief Executive and Officers for the paper and concluded the discussion.

## **5 UPDATE ON THE CONSULTATION ON FUTURE GRENFELL SUPPORT**

The Chair invited the Leader of the Council, Cllr Elizabeth Campbell, supported by Strategic Director for Grenfell Partnerships, Communities and Corporate Transformation, Callum Wilson, to introduce the report to the Committee.

The Committee:

- 5.1 Cautioned against the possibility of the outcome of the consultation being shaped by the way questions were asked and potentially exclusionary language such as 'most affected' and 'those who need it most' as this was not an either/or issue.
- 5.2 Explored what learning had been taken from the ongoing consultation. Officers indicated that significantly more time had been spent on it, along with door knocking and meetings organised around Ramadan to ensure residents could break their fast; while the External Scrutiny Team (EST) may have slowed the pace, residents may have been suspicious to trust the process without it. The Leader acknowledged that the EST had been challenging and helpful in examining the consultation questions and the Council was thankful that people had taken the time to communicate their thoughts.
- 5.3 Suggested exploring whether voluntary and community sector (VCS) partners had any useful learning from the last six years and queried whether there were any plans to consult and work with VCS and partner organisations directly on the consultation. Officers highlighted that, while they had consulted with VCSs in the past and provider workshops had been carried, the primary focus was on residents and a distinction had to be made about whether providers should be steering the future of spend for residents.

- 5.4 Queried how attendance could be increased for future phases of the consultation on future Grenfell support. Officers highlighted that some residents struggled with giving up two to three hours of their time and suggested that Phase 4 would return to workshops, with everyone in the area receiving a survey to provide an opportunity to comment on what would be happening next. Officers acknowledged that while the response from bereaved and survivors and children had been strong, it was not as strong among the immediate community.
- 5.5 Highlighted that an older group of young people had not felt the support had been as it needed to be and queried what the feedback on this was. Officers noted that most of the feedback came from young people leaving school who were considered to be a challenging group to engage and accepted the Council had to own that feedback.
- 5.6 Asked about the timeline for the remainder of the consultation. Officers explained that Phase 3 would be completed in the coming weeks, with feedback being pulled in to consider final proposals before they are checked by the EST. That would be followed by Phase 4 commencing from April 15 with completion in May. A paper would then go to Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Leadership Team. The EST would significantly ramp up their consultation efforts at the final proposal stage.
- 5.7 Requested more detail on how the Council had tried to contact the other 35% of the bereaved and survivors who were unable to be contacted. Officers indicated there were around 750 people in this cohort, of which there was a good idea from analysis who had responded. When a household analysis was carried out, the figure would increase to a 85% response rate, although it had to be acknowledged that 230 are under 18. The Council had access to the email addresses, and everyone had been presented with short surveys, long surveys and contacted via phone calls. Those who did not want to participate were still updated.
- 5.8 Enquired whether there was any data on response rates relating to the immediate local community near Grenfell Tower and children and young people. Officers indicated they would have to check the data for the response rate of the immediate community and children and young people.

**Action by:** Strategic Director for Grenfell Partnerships, Communities and Corporate Transformation

- 5.9 Asked what challenging decisions were on the horizon for the Council. Officers explained this was due to the wide variety of the feedback and making some people feel comfortable that ideas put forward by some of them may not be agreed upon by everyone else who proposed ideas.
- 5.10 Questioned whether the NHS was aligned with the consultation. Officers confirmed that the NHS was not party to the EST's oversight, but they had released a document outlining co-design and consultation with the Grenfell community with their consent. The NHS had been observing consultation sessions with residents.

- 5.11 Asked whether any issues had been identified with children born after the Grenfell Tragedy and how they were being assessed. Officers acknowledged it was not covered in the report; it depended on the household and date of birth, but the Council, as part of the current dedicated service, had always supported those born into bereaved and survivor households and would continue to monitor that group to provide support on any additional challenges.
- 5.12 Enquired what challenges were anticipated in relation to individual claims being paid. Officers acknowledged there would almost always be difficulties with discrepancies between different amounts, particularly with regard to those who could claim and those who could not – it would be inherently divisive. Officers suggested that when judges oversee significant claims, they do suggest some restorative justice funding to mediate their position.
- 5.13 Summarised that there had been progress and the opportunity had been taken to learn from outside advisors on consultation methods.

The Chair thanked the Leader of the Council and Officers for the report and concluded the discussion on the item.

## **6 THE FORWARD PLAN AND KEY DECISION TRACKER**

The Chair opened the discussion on the item.

The Committee:

- 6.1 Requested a report on Options for Vacant Grenfell Acquired Properties KD1007115 for the Housing and Communities Select Committee in the Summer.
- 6.2 Highlighted that it wished to conduct post-decision scrutiny on Issuing an Anti-Social Behaviour Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) in Earl's Court KD1007740.
- 6.3 Asked for the Key Decision report of Award of Contract For Phase 2 Works – Kensington Aldridge Academy KD1006990 to be circulated to the Family Services Select Committee for scrutiny.
- 6.4 Raised concerns that grants keep being frozen for youth clubs and suggested that Family Services Select Committee may want to examine this.
- 6.5 Identified a number of Key Decisions related to the Lancaster West Estate and suggested a report on refurbishment of Lancaster West, in advance of procurement, come to the Housing and Communities Select Committee.
- 6.6 Noted that the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Housing and Communities Select Committee were receiving a briefing on Transfer of homes into Council ownership KD1009106. A decision could then be made about whether more in-depth scrutiny was required.

6.7 Requested more information on Five-Year Support Agreement for the delivery of Notting Hill Carnival 2024 to 2028 KD1009101 as Environment Select Committee so that a report could be developed for Committee.

6.8 Asked for more information on Acquisition of a property to enable its use as respite and crisis support by the Bi-Borough Commissioning Department KD1008989.

6.9 Acknowledged this would be an Urgent Decision and requested a briefing on Notting Hill Police Station KD06139 in recognition of its sensitivity.

The Chair concluded the discussion.

## **7 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee opened the discussion on the item:

7.1 Requested that the response to the recommendations from the Budget Working Group included on the agenda for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting of 8 May 2024 be circulated in advance of the meeting once agreed by the Lead Members.

***Action by: Governance Officer and Scrutiny Manager***

7.2 Agreed to invite the Borough Commander to the July meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

***Action by: Scrutiny Manager***

The Chair concluded the discussion on the item.

The meeting ended at 8.13 pm

Chair