

STATEMENT FROM THE LABOUR GROUP OF COUNCILLORS IN KENSINGTON & CHELSEA

22nd June 2017

Following the forced “resignation” of Kensington & Chelsea’s most senior civil servant on Wednesday - CEO Nicholas Holgate - and media reports that the Leader of Kensington & Chelsea Borough Council (RBKC), Nicholas Paget-Brown was “unanimously” asked to stay on by his Cabinet when he offered his resignation yesterday; the Labour Group of Kensington & Chelsea Councillors are calling for the immediate resignation of all senior members of the RBKC Cabinet with direct responsibility for housing and property decisions, including the Leader.

“Civil servants should not take responsibility for decisions that politicians and the Cabinet of RBKC decided and agreed on. It is politicians who take the final key decisions and in RBKC these have often overridden the advice of senior civil servants”

The Labour Group of 11 Councillors in a chamber of 50 is a vocal and active minority and is acutely aware that it holds key evidence for the Public Inquiry regarding the Grenfell Tower disaster. Its representatives on the Housing & Property Scrutiny Committee (H&PSC) have represented the residents of Grenfell Tower continuously before, during and after the refurbishment; at the KCTMO board, the H&PSC - ensuring members of the Residents Association and Grenfell Action Group and their concerns were heard at the scrutiny committee - and through petitions and motions at Council meetings in 2015 and 2016.

The Labour Group notes and welcomes that the Metropolitan Police are undertaking a criminal investigation into the horrendous and avoidable deaths in the tower fire and is assisting in any way it can.

The Leader of the Labour Group, Councillor Robert Atkinson, noted that “part of being elected is being accountable. There is no confidence in North Kensington in the political leadership of the council. Councillor Feilding-Mellen, Cabinet Member for Housing & Property who is also the Deputy Leader, and Councillor Paget-Brown

as Leader should follow the chief executive and do the decent thing and resign.”

The Labour Group is also surprised that the TMO Board have not yet called for the resignation of the professional leaders of the TMO who persistently advised them that there were no serious problems with the Grenfell Tower refurbishment.