

**GLA Oversight Committee – Thursday 23 November 2017**  
**Transcript of Item 5 – Response of London Resilience to the London Grenfell Tower Fire**

**Len Duvall AM (Chair):** Welcome to our guests. We have Barry Quirk, Chief Executive of Royal Borough of Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Council (K&C); John Barradell, Town Clerk and Chief Executive from the City of London Corporation; Doug Patterson, Chief Executive of London Borough of Bromley; Eleanor Kelly, Chief Executive of Southwark; and David Bellamy, the Mayor's Chief of Staff here at the GLA. Can I welcome you all?

We have a number of formal questions, but there may well be some questions that arise from your answers that Members will wish to pursue. We will try to be as clear as we can if you can be as concise as you can. We know there is a background of a public inquiry into these events that have happened. It is not our role to pinpoint culpability about agencies or individuals, but we do want and seek assurances about matters of concern that arose from the tragedy, in the immediate aftermath and the post-recovery period, if I can call it that.

If I can begin then with question one, I suppose, John I am going to direct it to you, but you might well be supported by other colleagues. Can you just describe the role, from how you see it, of your Resilience Partnership? Also, can you walk us through what the role was in the immediate aftermath of the [Grenfell Tower] fire and what the timelines were? Just take us through and bring us up to date on how that works.

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** Thank you, Chair. If I could take a couple of minutes with the Committee just to do some introductory remarks, it may help set a context here.

First of all, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today regarding those activities following the tragic fire at Grenfell and to talk through the responsibilities of the various agencies, particularly the London Local Authority Gold (LLAG) arrangements and how they worked.

If I could say that, first of all, my role is as Chair of the Local Authority Panel (LAP). The LAP comprises chief executives, who take a leadership role in resilience across London. As a result of that, I am also Deputy Chair of the London Resilience Partnership - which is chaired by one of the Deputy Mayors - and as such, clearly, I was involved and have been involved with resilience for a number of years.

The second piece I would like to say is that the incidents that take place within London are managed within a context of previously arranged protocols and agreements between local authorities. Those have been tested this year seven times on seven different occasions of varying degrees of involvement across London and are based upon the concept of mutual support. These arrangements go back a long time. They predate 2004; they predate 1960. They actually go back to the 1950s in terms of looking at the risk of flooding in London and how local authorities would work together to address those issues. There is a long, involved history of local authorities working together and sharing expertise and staff that has been tested on a number of occasions and, as I say, seven times so far, this year.

As you have mentioned, there will be a public inquiry by Sir Martin Moore-Bick into the events, particularly - in the context of this Committee - the events that followed the fire and the responses from the various agencies,

including local authorities, to that and the support provided to the survivors, the families and the local area as well.

In total, over 500 local authority staff were involved across London - that excludes K&C's own staff and central Government staff and the voluntary sector - in the response to Grenfell. In terms of supporting not only the residents and the bereaved families but also the infrastructure support, the current work is still going on on the site of the tower itself. Five hundred is a significant contribution, I think, from every London borough over the time. In total, we had nine local authority chief executives directly involved. They were used to lead various work strands during the recovery part of the process to bring the expertise and the ability to direct resource and understand how these pieces work.

The activation of the arrangement, as I think you will be aware from your previous hearings, took place on the Friday [16 June 2017] afternoon, although, clearly, we were monitoring and watching events around Grenfell and in K&C from the early hours of Wednesday morning.

I will leave it there. If there are any more specific questions, clearly, we can go into the detail of that.

**Len Duvall AM (Chair):** The activation for your involvement, we understand from the protocols and we were clear last time - and we have some questions later on, but I just want us to be clear in our own minds before we leave this question - is around whether the local authority asked for mutual aid from the wider local government family. Is that where it is in terms of what you think the protocols are?

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** For events that would take place within an individual borough, as this was - and indeed a number of events earlier in the year were of a similar type; the Croydon tram crash earlier a year ago was in this context as well - the local authority involved would request mutual aid. It would be offered and that happened in this case, as far as I am aware.

If the incident gets to a level where clearly there needs to be wider support, particularly around leadership and bearing in mind the length of time these go on, then there is an ability for those authorities to request that from elsewhere, as indeed happened on Friday in this instance.

**Len Duvall AM (Chair):** We are going to go back into that period of time, if we said from that first week of recovery until that point when you kick in, and in terms of what mutual work. We might well be quoting from some documents. We will pick that up during the questions.

At the last meeting, we heard that the London Resilience arrangements such as the meeting of the Strategic Co-ordination Group (SCG) was triggered by various protocols and plans and so brought the partner agencies together in the immediate aftermath of the fire. What is your assessment of how those arrangements worked?

Let us say the [London] Fire Brigade (LFB) has finished in the early hours of the morning; they are still convening at something like 8 o'clock; a number of you in local government in terms of the resilience group have been contacted in the early hours of the morning whilst the fire is still continuing. K&C have taken responsibility for their bit; I think that is fair to say. Take us through that bit and then take us from the Friday afternoon bit. If we look at it in those two distinct bits, it would be helpful.

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** At 4.58am, I believe, the first message came to me in terms of the LLAG arrangements, literally a couple of minutes before 5.00am, informing me that there was an incident - because at the time I was elsewhere and not in London, as it happens - and that a SCG was going to be held, involving and led by the LFB, the Metropolitan Police [Service]

(MPS) and the LLAG, represented by people from Steve Hamm's [Head of Programmes, London Resilience] team at that time in the morning. That was the first point at which it became obvious an incident - to us - had happened and that first formal event.

In terms of subsequent to that, there were a number of SCGs that took place. We were not involved in those and I personally was not involved in those, although on Friday morning I did sit in on a telephone SCG; on the Friday morning, as I say.

**Len Duvall AM (Chair):** If we go to you, Barry then, from that period - not the early hours -, what did K&C do?

**Barry Quirk (Chief Executive, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Council):** I cannot give you any account of that because I was not in post at the time. I joined them on secondment from Lewisham [Council] in late June [2017].

What happened was that I attended a couple of meetings the following week to give management advice and, on the third day that I was there, it was clear that the then Chief Executive [Nicholas Holgate] was resigning. I then agreed at the end of June [2017], at the suggestion of both the Local Government Association and Government officials, to be an interim Chief Executive there. Therefore, I cannot give a first-hand account of what happened in those first few days. I was not even present in K&C until the following week.

**Len Duvall AM (Chair):** It is fair to say that in those first few days, there were concerns emerging. We know concerns were emerging amongst experts and we know that concerns were emerging amongst the victims and survivors and certainly from the media about what was taking place in those couple of days. Do any of you want to comment on that and about what the emerging discussions were? We have some specific questions around that, but can you confirm that the experts - if I can call you that - were talking about different responses with either K&C or amongst yourselves, albeit you were not directly involved in that period of time? In terms of the evidence we had at our first hearing, that is what we were being told. Is that correct?

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** From my perspective, clearly, we were watching what was happening and trying to assist with what was happening in K&C. Staff were working in K&C and a couple of people directly working with us were involved. We were getting reports back of how those operations and how those events were taking place, the structures being put in place and the support being provided. It was quite clear that the escalation of the demand, if I can put it that way, on public services gives an indication, I think of the fact, 500 staff around London were involved fairly quickly in this - of the scale of event and the scale of impact on the local community. It was significant and that was appreciated more and more as events took place over the following days. That is why, I believe, the activation of the arrangements took place: the need to put more resource in and to put more support in around K&C. Everyone, I think, Chair, looked at the news and saw the scale of what was going in the local area.

**Doug Patterson (Chief Executive, London Borough of Bromley):** Chair, sorry, if I may add a comment to that, by then, from the images of the event, Bromley and other boroughs were putting staff in and were making offers of help and support to K&C. In terms of the preparedness from the chief executives, I am sitting out on Thursday evening and I got a call from John saying, "This is cranking up, cranking up. Are you in if we need some help?" That was where it was; getting prepared for what was coming or anticipating what was coming. Thank you.

**Len Duvall AM (Chair):** The tragedy was at the higher end, wasn't it? In terms of the magnitude and the numbers we are dealing with, the numbers of survivors, the number of people who needed support, were considerable.

Correct me if I am wrong because I just want to be clear in my own mind. Let us say at 5 o'clock the London Resilience group starts to gather information and the type of support that might well be needed. It is early stages yet but that is what sort of exercise would be going on. You are talking amongst yourselves, talking to colleagues in K&C, talking to emergency services.

Tell me. When the strategic co-ordination protocols are enacted, they are almost enacted virtually by K&C saying, "We are taking the lead in this aftermath. We are still talking to you. We do not think we need any help. We think we can deal with it ourselves". Is that when that protocol is enacted? Is that immediately at 5 o'clock or is that at some other specific time?

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** The lead authority at the beginning would have been the authority dealing with the incident, which was at the beginning the LFB, and the chairing of the strategic group moved to the MPS on the second meeting, if my memory is right. I have to say, Chair, that I was not there and so I am going on what I have been told subsequently.

**Len Duvall AM (Chair):** Yes, that is fine.

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** After that when events moved from response, which clearly was still going on during the course of Wednesday, it would transfer across to the recovery phase. The two do run, as you have heard before, almost inevitably in parallel, with humanitarian assistance needed during the response phase and the dealing-with-the-incident phase as well. That would then transfer to the local authority function.

If I could be a little bit clearer as well, each of the 33 local authority chief executives in London participates in a rota whereby one of them is on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and has a second chief executive standing by as what we call the second. The person for those two, as you heard before, was transferring and switching the following day; however, the continuity piece is provided with briefing and you have heard evidence from Steve Hamm about that earlier on. So there is always a chief executive on duty.

The scale of this was quite evident and, therefore, the more senior - if I could put it that way - and the more experienced chief executives did understand, as indeed Doug has mentioned, that we would almost certainly be called in by K&C and would need to provide significant support to them.

**Barry Quirk (Chief Executive, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea):** I just wanted to add that, although I was not there, I have made sure that the Head of Audit, who had himself arrived after, both locked down and got all of the information and ensured that that information is now with the inquiry, which is the detailed, minute-by-minute, hour-by-hour chronology at that time.

**Len Duvall AM (Chair):** Would I be right in thinking, then, that we have the local authority resilience group working alongside and doing some work in case there is a request for mutual aid and understanding what that is. We have K&C in terms of coordinating those issues. I would be right in expecting - because we do not know exactly when it was - that they would be convening their own meetings within their borough immediately? Is that what that would be? Running parallel with the London Resilience group, K&C will be co-ordinating meetings within their own resources, their own agencies, within their borough to work out what they need to help support the survivors during that time? All right.

Can I just keep running through just in my own mind? We get to the situation on Friday, which becomes much clearer and we move in to support K&C. Is that fair to say? Against that background that I said earlier, with even the Government was raising questions about the nature of the support given to people. Then we run from Friday.

Then we get to a situation where I am a bit hazy around the Government taskforce that is put in. We are working and then there is a Government taskforce that is working. Is that much later when we finish working and there is a different recovery phase, or is it a continuum of the work that goes through?

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** Chair, it is exactly the same. A different set of words was used to describe the arrangements of our London local government and arrangements within City Hall that are put in place. The language was used to describe something that already existed.

**Len Duvall AM (Chair):** All right. Good. Then we have all the different bits in our own minds and so we can then move on. I will take colleagues.

**Sian Berry AM:** Just a couple of questions about the actual handover process to you becoming, or the triggering process for, LLAG which meant you could go in and act as the Chief Executive, effectively, of K&C. I think - and I am trying to find the reference - that we were previously told that that happen on Friday morning, but you said Friday afternoon. I wanted to check the exact time that you were able to spend their resources and to take charge.

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** That would be Friday afternoon. It was clear --

**Sian Berry AM:** What time did that happen?

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** That would have been at 2.00pm, I believe.

**Sian Berry AM:** You were able to do some work on Friday?

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** Exactly. I was physically present in K&C on Friday morning, but part of it is allowing K&C to chair the final meetings, to understand the processes that they have in place, and then to take over afterwards.

**Sian Berry AM:** What was the delay? As far as I understand it, on Thursday night, they decided they were going to do this. Is there paperwork? What actually has to happen?

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** There is a request that needs to be made that they wish the arrangement to be put in place.

**Sian Berry AM:** Is that in writing?

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** No, it is verbal. It can be done verbally.

**Sian Berry AM:** Then, before you can actually take over, there is a delay of some hours?

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** It is worth, Chair, if I can, just clarifying the role. The role here is not command and control of asset at this stage. The role here is co-ordinating a response. The responsibility for that is still with the local borough. This is about co-ordinating and providing support, encouragement and, if you will, advice and the co-ordinating role of the function. The spending of money, frankly, was already happening by K&C. They were already spending the cash. This was more about co-ordinating and stepping in to check and to start validating the plans to be put in place, was there mutual aid in place and so on.

**Sian Berry AM:** That is leadership with the ability to direct resources --

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** Yes.

**Sian Berry AM:** -- but less so than taking over entirely?

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** It is not quite a police command-and-control system.

**Sian Berry AM:** Great. The other question I have is possibly for Barry. How many staff from K&C were mobilised initially to the scene before all this happened, before the transfer?

**Barry Quirk (Chief Executive, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea):** I do not know that information but I do know how many are mobilised now and I know how many we are mobilising but I do not know what the issues were at the time. I arrived, as I say, late the following week and I took over K&C's management arrangements 10 days after that. I actually cannot say with authority, "This is the number that were present on the day". I have spoken to many staff who were present on the day and so I do know that people were mobilised and know that when I arrived they were having daily Gold meetings, which I took over. I changed the focus of them and the urgency about them, but I cannot give a first-hand account of what was happening in those first few days.

**Sian Berry AM:** Can we find that out from --

**Len Duvall AM (Chair):** I wonder if you could find that information and pass it back to us.

**Barry Quirk (Chief Executive, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea):** Certainly, yes.

**Len Duvall AM (Chair):** You have to be polite and speak in a different language than maybe I have to, but the Friday 'intervention' - if I can call it that because it was intervention by another name, whether it was supportive and leading - and the number of chief executives involved almost says, "If K&C had not asked for help and support, then someone else was going to make sure it got in there". Could you envisage carrying on in the maelstrom of the media, victims and the Government questioning what was going on, the Mayor questioning what was going on and allowing it to continue for more days? It was a significant intervention on the Friday and a bit of a turnaround, albeit in very difficult circumstances with the aftermath and the tragedy you were dealing with. Am I right to call it an 'intervention' or are you still sticking to the 'request'?

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** It is not language, Chair, that I would use. It is more --

**Len Duvall AM (Chair):** You are so polite, John. You are too polite.

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** You are very kind. It is more about us being able to be clear what the offer to K&C was, and understanding that colleagues understood the scale now and were making offers of support to them that they really ought to be taking, and there was an ability to co-ordinate that being offered. That is the distinction I would draw. 'Intervention' has a very specific meaning and one of the lessons, if I can say this to the Committee, that we have - and indeed we have commissioned some work in London Councils exactly around this point - is: how would you go about encouraging a borough that was not necessarily understanding the scale or indeed the support that was available to them, to encourage them to go through an activation process? At the moment, it is designed around boroughs asking and boroughs saying, "Please come and help". There are clear lessons here about activating it sooner and understanding the scale and the opportunity of support from elsewhere sooner. It is a clear lesson that is being looked at, externally, I have to say, to London as well but I can come to that later if that is helpful.

**Len Duvall AM (Chair):** Barry, you want to come in? Before you come in, can I just ask? From your period at K&C, what were the deliberations in K&C asking for mutual support? Are you aware of those internal discussions at K&C?

**Barry Quirk (Chief Executive, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea):** No, not at all, because that was a conversation between the former Chief Executive and I did not speak to him about this. I was basically involved in the urgency of the moment.

Look, I have worked in London local government since 1977. I began in housing. This is the worst tragedy in London in my life and the moral urgency of dealing with this seems to me to be what is driving all of the London authorities to try to support and aid. It is absolutely critical that, whatever the arrangements are, we look at them in detail and make sure that we have real lessons about how we act with greater urgency and greater pace because there is no question that more should be done.

We are doing this every day now. It is what energises people in K&C who work there: how can we improve the circumstances and the life chances? How can we make sure that those 71 people and the 64 families who are bereaved and the victims and survivors are able to have adequate life chances and adequate life outcomes from this awful and appalling tragedy?

**Len Duvall AM (Chair):** I do want to pursue this. If you cannot give me the answers, I hope the public inquiry gets some answers from you. Do you know what I mean? I am going to ask the Chief of Staff. There were various COBRA meetings, which I understand was reported in the press when the Government was raising concerns about the performance of local government. Let us be fair because it was about local government, not just K&C, at that time. What is your understanding of why the support mechanisms and mutual aid issue kicked in on the Friday? Am I correct in terms of those periods of days when people were looking at this and saying, "We cannot continue in this way"?

**David Bellamy (Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office):** Chair, firstly, as a technical point, they were not technically COBRA meetings; they were ministerial meetings, although they did make use of COBRA facilities and so there has been some public confusion about the terminology there. Originally, there were ministerial meetings on the Wednesday afternoon and the Thursday afternoon, chaired by the Police and Fire Minister, and then on the Friday, chaired by the Prime Minister. Subsequently, I believe, she chaired the meeting on the Saturday and several times that week. There was also an officials' meeting on the Sunday. The Mayor or myself were at all those meetings.

It is fair to say that on the Wednesday, there were a lot of people getting their heads around things. The Mayor at the meeting on the Wednesday asked a lot of questions and was pushing for a lot of action. At the meeting on the Thursday, clearly, the Government was seized of the scale of the situation. The Minister and the Housing Minister had appeared before Members of Parliament (MPs). The Committee will recall that it was not done formally in the House because the appropriate processes for forming the new Parliament were still taking place following the General Election, but a meeting of MPs was held at which those Ministers spoke. It was clear then that the Government Ministers were very seized of the mood of their parliamentary colleagues and the need for action and that was brought into that meeting. Clearly, there was some evidence - and I personally felt - that the matters were not proceeding on the ground as they needed to, given the scale of the situation.

That then brought us to Thursday evening. When I left there, I spoke to John [Barradell], who confirmed the discussions to activate LLAG arrangements were underway. Then there was the meeting chaired by the Prime Minister on Friday, at which John, as he said, just assumed the role and was present on that meeting.

To answer your previous question, I would say that had John not been in post, I think the Prime Minister would have wanted some action to be taken. It is a counterfactual as to what that might have been, but it was clear that a step needed to be taken. Clearly, the activation of the mutual aid arrangements and John supported by chief executive colleagues coming into post was what was required to start addressing it.

**Dr Onkar Sahota AM:** In the resilience arrangements, when did the National Health Service (NHS) get involved as this tragedy was unfolding? There was obviously the immediate response by hospital staff, but there was a huge need for the NHS and the community services. At what stage does the NHS get involved the resilience arrangements and are put on alert that this is the magnitude of the tragedy that is unfolding, which will result in a huge amount of community service needs and also psychological and counselling support for the victims and the survivors? When do they get involved on the scene?

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** If I can pick up to two parts of that and then ask Eleanor [Kelly] maybe to comment a little more on it, there is a thing called the Humanitarian Assistance Plan that covers a lot of the areas which you were referring to. The NHS would have been, as a responder, as Steve [Hamm] would have said, involved right at the beginning in the SCG at the beginning. The London Ambulance Service particularly would be involved at the very beginning of an incident of this type. Subsequent to that, the various NHS elements, be it Public Health England, the NHS local providers, the clinical commission group (CCG) and so on, would have been part of that Humanitarian Assistance Group and were.

**Dr Onkar Sahota AM:** Thank you.

**Peter Whittle AM:** Yes, thank you. Barry, I just want to press you a little bit on what my colleague Assembly Member Berry asked. I am just a little bit perplexed that you have no idea how many people went from K&C to Grenfell on that day. You said you had no idea because you were not there at the time. You have had quite a long time, presumably knowing you were coming here as well today. Can you at least give us a general, vague figure of how many people would have gone?

**Barry Quirk (Chief Executive, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea):** I will certainly circulate to the Committee what the number is. I shall go back and I shall ask the questions about that and make the best estimate I can.



I have to say that most of the time I am working - and have been since that second and third week - I am working on making sure we have adequate people on housing. I have hired another 250 staff to work on housing allocations and on the Care for Grenfell key social workers and so on. I have been strengthening co-ordination, changing of the organisation and making it more effective and organised in a different way. This has really changed the nature of K&C's budget in many ways and its organisation.

If I could give you an example, K&C is probably the smallest borough in London. It only has 6,500 social housing tenants. At the time of the fire, one in 20 was in a hotel. The impact of this within a small borough with such a small social housing stock meant that it was really unable to cope with that at a time. It did not have a housing department; it has a tenant management organisation, which is a managing agent that is run by the tenants, or a tenant-led organisation. It is a small organisation. We are desperately trying to rehouse people.

We - as does every other London borough - spend quite big portion of our money on children's social care and on adult social care and on homelessness. With Grenfell, we are now spending probably over 80% of our resource on targeted individuals. It is fundamentally changing the nature of K&C as an authority over a very quick period.

I have had to reorganise and reset the organisation to take account of that and to work into the future, not pore over what the issues were and how many were there on the Friday afterwards. I am looking at how many care workers we have for next week and for the week after, and how many properties we are getting. We are purchasing 300 properties at the moment.

**Peter Whittle AM:** Yes. Sir, with respect, we are talking about that Friday.

**Barry Quirk (Chief Executive, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea):** I understand.

**Sian Berry AM:** Thank you, Assembly Member Whittle. That gets at my question a bit better actually. I am a Camden councillor and we had to evacuate four of our towers very suddenly, 3,000 people or so. There was no tragedy, but there were an awful lot of people who needed practical support and the Council mobilised people. I am certain I have seen the number of people who were mobilised from the Council staff.

Is it the case from what you have just been saying, though, that K&C did not have a lot of staff who were skilled in those things to draw upon? Was that something that maybe should have been known about as a risk, potentially, in the case of a lot of the humanitarian --

**Barry Quirk (Chief Executive, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea):** I do not want to give the impression that it did not mobilise staff. It did mobilise staff. Whether it mobilised enough is obviously a big question --

**Sian Berry AM:** Yes, but with no housing department, for example --

**Barry Quirk (Chief Executive, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea):** Yes. It does not have an internal housing department and it has a small staff. It has just 2,000 staff, whereas I think Camden has closer to 5,000. It is a different challenge. It is the biggest challenge. It is the worse tragedy in the smallest borough with the smallest social housing stock.

**Sian Berry AM:** In the context of what we are talking about, that potentially means that mutual aid should have been triggered maybe sooner. It is another reason why, is it not?

**Len Duvall AM (Chair):** These are just introductory questions. We are going to drill down further, just to be clear with you. I do not want to be dishonest with you. Eleanor, did you want to come in on any points that you have heard?

**Eleanor Kelly (Chief Executive, London Borough of Southwark):** I would have come in after David [Bellamy], but that actually addresses the point that Sian Berry has just made. I would not want the Committee to have the impression that we were just having a watching brief and sitting on our hands and waiting to see what happened. It is a fact that there is nothing in the resolution that allows us to step in or allows us to impose intervention in any borough. However, as John [Barradell] said, that is something that the London Councils review may well look at: how can you accelerate it?

To the point that Doug [Patterson] made about the offers of help that were already being made, in relation to what was happening in K&C at the time, on behalf of Southwark I offered help at 6.00am on Wednesday morning because we had experience of the Lakanal [House] fire and, although that was on a much smaller scale, we knew how to step through it and we knew both the short-term and the long-term implications.

Having made that offer, as a result of conversations during the course of the day between the Chief Executive of K&C and John and I, K&C allowed me to send two of my strategic directors into the Gold meeting that they had on Thursday morning, one who was very experienced in relation to Gold arrangements and emergency planning and one who was very experienced in relation to housing. Those officers reported back to John and I, and John and I had the conversation, as David indicated, on the Thursday evening with the Chief Executive of K&C, in part with the result that on Friday they did invoke LLAG.

That is only one borough's experience of reaching out and being involved both from a local authority point of view and my own borough's point of view, and also in relation to the way that the LAP arrangements kicked in and that John and I were talking about this and talking to K&C from the Wednesday.

**Len Duvall AM (Chair):** In the series of conversations and being involved in meetings, I say 'intervention', you say 'support', but really a recognition by K&C that they could not cope. Yes or no?

**Eleanor Kelly (Chief Executive, London Borough of Southwark):** Invoking the resolution means that you cannot cope on your own. There are formal and informal examples of the resolution being invoked, as John said, since the resolution was set up in 2010, which made it London-wide. Previously it was sub-regional. In 2010 when this resolution was set up, it made it London-wide, and that is a very important issue when you are looking at scale.

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** Sorry, Chair. The reason I hesitated around 'intervention' was that the scale of this became apparent over time. It was very clear at the beginning that it was an absolutely tragic event with people having lost lives, their homes, everything, and the impact on the community, but the extent of that grew over the course of the next 48 hours, quite clearly. The ability of the community itself to organise, to handle donations, to manage their own response, as it were, became very evident over 48 hours. At that point, any borough in London, in my belief, would have had to ask for support from elsewhere.

Also, bear in mind the staff there had been on call - on duty, as it were - by then for 72 hours. It is no surprise that they would be asking for support at a very senior level as well, if nothing else, to be able to get some respite and recharge batteries. It is no surprise to me that that happened. I would say that any borough would have had an issue with the amount of demand that was placed on it.

If I can say, the 500 number is an enormous number. Over 100 of those were social workers. I am sure we will get into the wraparound support and so on, but that, again, exceeds the number of social workers in any individual borough, as far as I am aware, in London, as well as the current caseload that they would be dealing with.

**Len Duvall AM (Chair):** Do others want to come in at this point or will we proceed with the formal questions?

**Andrew Boff AM:** I will wait for the drilling down --

**Len Duvall AM:** We are going to drill down --

**Andrew Boff AM:** -- though I just wanted to respond to that, if I may. You were saying that the scale was not apparent for a considerable period of time. I am finding that quite difficult to absorb. The scale was apparent very early on, was it not, and --

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** It was probably loose words. It is the consequences of the event itself and the complexity of the response that would have been required. There was the setting up of the rest centre, the spontaneous volunteering that took place, the involvement of local churches, on multiple sites. In the first 24 hours, for example, there were four rest centres running, with individuals placed in individual rest centres, some staying with family and friends, some staying in hotels, some sleeping on floors. That is an incredibly complex position to try to bring some order to and some organised support to. It was complexity rather than scale. That is probably a better use of words.

**Andrew Boff AM:** I cannot see what would have been a better situation, if you want. I cannot understand. All those things you have mentioned are surely automatic from hundreds of people suddenly losing their homes, irrespective of the deaths and everything, but this session is not considering that. Surely it must have been known quite early on that if a couple of hundred people are suddenly made instantly homeless, there will be that scale of response required?

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** As I said, the word 'scale' was probably not the appropriate word. 'Complexity' --

**Andrew Boff AM:** Or the complexity required.

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** The complexity here, though, is also to do with community, to do with community infrastructure, to do with - as Barry talked about - the scale of the local authority, the time of day, etc. That all played a part in increasing the complexity of this over time.

**Andrew Boff AM:** Thank you.

**Eleanor Kelly (Chief Executive, London Borough of Southwark):** Chair, just to illustrate that, we have had much higher numbers of households having to be immediately evacuated all across London, for example, as a result of unexploded World War Two bombs. The vast majority of those incidents have always passed very well without a crisis situation, if you like, in relation to housing either in overnight rest centres or in hotels and so forth. There is an issue about - absolutely - the complexity and the community response. The impact on the community of this terrible tragedy unfolding in front of people's eyes massively increased the humanitarian

assistance required in the area over and above the impact of a tragic fire impacting on 151 properties. It was of much greater complexity and that, therefore, gave it much more scale than the 151 properties that were destroyed plus the people from the walkway blocks who had to be evacuated from within the cordon.

**Shaun Bailey AM:** Just quickly, I have to agree with my colleagues here because any particular disaster has a perceived level of complexity with it, but surely somebody on the ground at your very high level would have known that this would have been a very particular case because they were permanently excluded from their homes. To use your example of an unexploded bomb, at some point you are going back. Surely someone would have realised that this particular borough, the smallest borough, as has been mentioned before, is going to have 200-plus families who are permanently needing housing. I do not understand how the scale or the complexity, whichever word you used, was not perceived almost immediately. For me, there is a failure there. Who assesses these things? Who looks at what the recovery stage is going to look like?

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** I understand the point of the question. The piece for me here is that these events do not happen in isolation on an exercise table in a room somewhere; they happen to real communities with real backgrounds and real history and real people's lives being lost. For me, the complexity increased because we did not appreciate at a distance - nor would we - the local community, the local community makeup, the relationships within that community and how they worked. That was not going to be apparent unless we were physically present on the ground and had history in that community.

I do accept Mr Boff's [Andrew Boff AM] point, but 'scale' was the wrong word to use. The scale to me was the response scale rather than the scale in the community, if you see what I mean, and the complexity plays an enormous part in that. It is not something, unless you are in the community, you would truly understand. What happened here was we began to understand as outsiders the impact on that community over the first 72 hours and it became very evident that it was far more complex and far more impactful on that community than at first sight from outside.

**Len Duvall AM (Chair):** In some ways, some of the complexity is about the protocols we are following. With an understanding of the requirement for early intervention and the support of the local government family we may have got to grips with the complexity and issues much earlier than 72 hours after the fire. We heard it earlier on. Much of that loss of life and the immediate aftermath impacting on the tragedy. The Camden experience the weekend after that of moving substantial numbers is, in the context of recovery, putting them in places of holding and then moving them in, and providing the required support. OK, we do not have the tragedy of loss of life and near-death experience for the survivors, but they are basic bread-and-butter issues of resilience planning and emergency planning. You are telling me through your answers that there was a picture emerging in terms of the capabilities of an authority to deal with this issue or to recognise very early on it that needed help and support. That is where we are --

**Andrew Boff AM:** In summary, for that scale to have been realised, who needed to be in the room or needed to be in those meetings of the SCG to allow them to realise what the complexity was?

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** That goes back to the question the Chair asked at the beginning in terms of part of the lessons learned here of the need to understand at what point and what levers you have to say to an authority, "Actually, the scale is so big. You are dealing in the minutiae; you are dealing locally. You need to understand we are here to help and we can assist in doing that". It is the activation of the protocol. It is the activation of the local authority mutual aid, which is one of the lessons from here, because it could have been done differently and probably should in

retrospect have been done differently. That is one of the things we have asked an outside set of chief executives and others to look at so that we learn the lessons from that.

**Barry Quirk (Chief Executive, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea):** May I add to this? Bringing in chief executives from outside London to scrutinise what we have done and to look at what we have done and how we have done it is absolutely important for broader assurance. It is not just the risk and the incident. It is the organisation's capacity and capability to deal with it, and that varies enormously across London. You have a London-wide perspective; the individual authorities have their own perspective. I would say, going from Lewisham to K&C, there was less capacity and capability because there is much less social housing and therefore less ability and the organisation is smaller. This is both about the risk but also about the organisations that are there and their capability in actually doing this, which is not just the numbers of staff but the properties that are available. There was only 2% turnover in social housing in K&C. It was 9% in Lewisham. Two per cent of 6,500 means about 200 a year.

**Len Duvall AM (Chair):** With all due respect, I am a layperson and I am not even in your role - I would not even dream of wanting to be a chief executive of a London borough - but that would tell me that I need help and support much quicker. I do not need to wait for a long time to work out that there are some problems here. Equally, against the background of that 72 hours, the Government is telling you that they think something is wrong. I am sitting and watching television (TV) thinking, "Something is not going quite right", as a person looking from the outside. I am sceptical of what I see in the media half the time, but from the information being provided through the TV and watching from afar, the victims and survivors were saying it was not right and, somehow, we trundled along through what I think is a very important period of recovery, which - you tell me - in terms of anyone involved in emergency planning is quite crucial in terms of the assessment and need on post-recovery issues. Something was not quite right.

I am going to take Navin very quickly. You are going to have to amend your formal question slightly because we have covered it. Then we are going to go to Tony Devenish because we have lots of questions to ask.

**Navin Shah AM:** Barry, you commented that K&C is a small-scale authority. However, for three days before activation, they mobilised their own resources. Are you or anyone on the panel able to tell us what the actual structure was of their operations and how it actually worked?

**Barry Quirk (Chief Executive, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea):** All I can say is that when I arrived - and like John mentioned, he attended their Gold meeting on the Friday - what happened was the London Gold took over at that time. I then arrived the following week and saw how they were organised. They were organised, in a sense, in the same way that the London Gold was set up; in other words, housing, humanitarian, family assistance centre. They were mobilising in the lines established by the London Gold arrangements.

The numbers of people mobilised I would get back to you on because I do not have that, but they were organised not in a haphazard way but in an organised way in accordance with the London Gold and the emergency arrangements.

**Navin Shah AM:** It is worrying that it took them three days to realise that, given the constraints they have had, they had to trigger and enlist Gold support.

**Barry Quirk (Chief Executive, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea):** The Leader of my Council and I have apologised to people for the response in the immediate aftermath of the fire. We have apologised directly to the victims, the survivors, the bereaved and the community in that area.

**Navin Shah AM:** Yes.

**Tony Devenish AM:** Can I start with John [Barradell] and Eleanor [Kelly]? Could you, John, start by taking us through the process by which Gold assesses the need and accesses levels of support, please? Perhaps you can do it in terms of the processes and policies that you have. Also, perhaps – and I declare an interest in that I know some of the things that were being done by the boroughs – it would help if both of you and Eleanor gave more examples to the Members of how informally teams of officers across London were already feeding into the process. I am not sure that that point has come out strongly. It is not as, with respect to Navin, what he said, that it took three days and almost nothing was happening, to misquote him. A lot was going on and perhaps you could illustrate that with some of the examples you have given me in the past.

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** If I can do the top level and then drive down to the specifics, the group of emergency planning officers across London do meet and oversee the creation of the individual plans. You have heard of one, which is a Humanitarian Assistance Plan, and that covers all the areas you would expect it to through rest centres, through those aspects of housing and so forth. That was the plan that was implemented by K&C and they went through that. They held meetings in the early days, I believe, for that. That process has developed across London and there is a minimum standard, as it were, of capability that boroughs say that they will meet. That process takes place for humanitarian assistance, mass fatalities and the various other plans that were described to you at a previous session.

In terms of the local arrangements, K&C were offered support from other London boroughs and indeed accepted it on various of those strands in the first two or three days. Officers with some experience went across to assist the leadership team in K&C, as Eleanor said, on the Wednesday, in fact, they started to arrive to provide support. The activation on the Friday was the transfer, as it were, of the London local authority arrangements and the activation of the formal mutual aid. That took place on the Friday; conversations, though, on the Thursday.

The plans exist. There is a rather large binder that Eleanor has somewhere about her person about an inch thick of those plans that each London borough has activation processes for, which would cover things like humanitarian assistance, as I say.

**Tony Devenish AM:** Thank you. Eleanor, in terms of specifics, I guess the question most Members are asking directly and indirectly is, effectively, what can Gold do until mutual aid is asked for in terms of that joint working?

**Eleanor Kelly (Chief Executive, London Borough of Southwark):** What Gold can do until the resolution is invoked in a formal sense is exactly what did happen in relation to offering specific help and support, sending in named officers on particular topics or for particular bits of the plan. Other parts of the plan activate anyway; for example, mass fatalities are under the ownership of the Coroner.

The early part of your question, though, is about how we then build on what is there because, if you think of it in relation to the evidence and the structures that you can go back to, you go back to the minutes of the SCG that was at that point under the Gold command of the MPS with all the other agencies feeding into that, including what was happening in Gold in K&C. The things that they had done – for example, the temporary accommodation that they had put the survivors into – in terms of taking over, in the first instance, we are providing support in the way that we can in an informal basis when we have been invited to by the borough itself. However, once the Gold resolution is invoked, we are in a position to be able to examine each of those strands, whether it is all the individual bits of the Humanitarian Assistance Plan, the rest centre, the temporary

accommodation, the communications, the direct community engagement and the other elements of the plan, including issues around rehousing. We can get into much more detail and much more ownership once that resolution is invoked but, prior to that, all we can do is offer advice and assistance.

**Tony Devenish AM:** Thank you. You have had several months since the tragedy now. A number of you are chief executives within London Councils. Is there a role for London Councils going forward? What have you concluded? I know it is a work in progress but are there any points you have come across wearing your London Councils hats that you could share with the Committee that are relevant?

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** If I can give a bit more detail on the review that is taking place, which may speak to that, there are lessons, clearly, to learn in terms of the response of the individual authorities within London and the arrangements and whether the arrangements are fit for the purpose given what happened at Grenfell. That we will be reporting back to the leaders of London Councils in February next year [2018], to give an indication of timeline.

The two people involved to lead that are Tom Riordan, who is the Chief Executive of Leeds City Council, a very experienced chief executive in a different part of the country, and Mary Ney, who is currently one of the Commissioners up in Rotherham. Mary has a background, as you know, Chair, in local government in London and understands the arrangements and can, therefore, help interpret those. Leaders are being met as part of that along with the chief executives and along with partner agencies - the NHS as an example - and along with community groups and so on, as well.

The terms of reference for that are to make sure that the plans that were developed last year and the year before for improving arrangements, which were horribly called EP2020 - we love acronyms in this business - which was looking forward to what a fit-for-purpose set of tools and responsibilities be in the future and to validate those as still right. That included support in exactly the areas we have been discussing this morning so far and also looking back and seeing if the arrangements we have are still fit for purpose. Those are the ones we are focusing on.

That does include activity by members as well as officers and so it includes both ends of us, as it were, the actions of London Councils itself as well as the emergency planning side. As I say, it reports in February [2018].

**Tony Devenish AM:** Thank you. In terms of how Gold spends money or is able to spend money, how would that process work? How was money triggered? Could you confirm that the money was not a problem in any way in how things worked out?

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** No, it was not an issue at all. Two things apply. The resolution has particular spending limits that apply until such time as the requests are made and so there are some technicalities around that. The Bellwin scheme, which is central Government support in the event of major emergencies, was also activated. Between London Councils there is an arrangement that £100,000 can be spent by each authority that they will take themselves to use within internal resource. That is their contribution, as it were, to mutual aid. Anything above that is claimed against what is called the Bellwin scheme. That is in addition to any spending that was done directly by K&C, which would be mainly on capital and service support and so on. Money was not an issue in terms of responding that arose at all.

**Tony Devenish AM:** Thank you, Chair. I am looking for your guidance on the next question you have written down. It has pretty much been answered, but I will read it out. It says:

*“In a disaster situation, how are levels of humanitarian need assessed? What is the process for providing that help to survivors and which organisations are involved?”*

It has been answered but, if you feel not, please. The one that would really help, though, at some stage - obviously, post the meeting, John - would be some kind of organisation chart showing exactly how everything fits in because this is very complex for even those of us who were involved in terms of who did what and when.

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** I am more than happy, Chair, to provide that. Can I make a comment about humanitarian assistance? There was a phrase you used called ‘keyworkers’. It was very clear - and it speaks to Assembly Member Bailey’s point earlier on - that the needs of the individuals, the victims and the people displaced from their homes was different to that expected in some senses. The response and the resource that we would have had, would have and was, social worker response. The nature of a social worker actually is different to that needed in this circumstance and it appeared over time that one of the lessons learned was that it is probably closer to the police Family Liaison Officer (FLO) role than it is a social worker role. Part of the learning again - and we have asked for this to be part of the review - is what does that person, what does that skillset look like. There is a requirement to train people up in London to be able to fulfil that should we need this again. That is another piece of learning out of this. Individuals clearly did have issues with the keyworkers that they were assigned, the ability of the keyworkers to respond and understand the needs of the individuals and the families, and then to get access to the right services. As those were raised, we did try to deal with those, but systemically there was an issue about finding the right skills in local authorities to provide that wraparound support.

**Andrew Boff AM:** On the morning of the fire when the protocols were activated and the SCG was set up, how was K&C asked or requested? What happened? We have heard from Ms Kelly about the Thursday and that there was a meeting with K&C and, that evening, they took the decision to activate the protocol. However, I am more interested on Wednesday, when we did know it was of very large scale and we did know the SCG responsibilities. One of the standard items in an SCG meeting is the recovery stage and so it must have been considered even at that early stage. How were K&C communicated with over this request that they consider help?

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** I honestly could not answer the question. I was not on the SCG and it would be speculation, Assembly Member Boff, being brutally honest. I have no knowledge of what was said on the call or --

**Andrew Boff AM:** Mr Quirk, then, I do not know if you have any information as to when K&C was first asked by the SCG to consider help.

**Barry Quirk (Chief Executive, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea):** I am afraid I do not have that information. In fact, I was not aware of what Eleanor Kelly said earlier, which seemed to me to be a very useful contribution in terms of --

**Andrew Boff AM:** One of the things we do not have is minutes of the SCG or minutes of the decision-making process. It would be very helpful for this Committee to have those because it is quite difficult to understand why the collective protocols failed if we do not know how they were applied at the time.

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** I do not wish to appear unhelpful. I would need to check whether I have them because, if I do not, I cannot release them. They are chaired by the LFB. I would have to go and check, Chair.



**Andrew Boff AM:** They are there.

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** Yes. I would expect a public inquiry also to have had those released as part of the public documentation.

**David Bellamy (Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office):** Chair, that would be a matter for London Resilience as the secretariat for the SCG. I believe they have already provided the Committee with an attendee list for those meetings, which gives you the times at which the Committee met, and then any requests you can direct to London Resilience and they will provide information where they can consistent with the requirements of the public inquiry.

**Len Duvall AM (Chair):** We have actually requested them and we had a positive on that. They must have been checking with partner organisations or going back, but we will pursue that further. Navin Shah?

**Navin Shah AM:** Should there be a place for a Mayor's representative or the GLA on the Gold group, given the strategic nature of that that group and, indeed, in terms of progressing joined-up working?

**David Bellamy (Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office):** The SCG, which meets to co-ordinate the response to an incident, does have a GLA representative on it. The GLA Duty Officer sits on that group in order to be informed because the Mayor's responsibility for the response phase is to act as the voice of Londoners. The Duty Officer plays a role there to hear what is going on and ensure that where the GLA is able to contribute support or make offers we do that, but mainly to ensure that the Mayor is briefed on what is going on.

**Navin Shah AM:** David [Bellamy], you are content with that arrangement and how it has worked in the case of this incident? We are talking about learning lessons and anything that would speed up decision-making and the effectiveness of the emergency tasks that there are. That is why I raise the question. I do not want to add another layer of bureaucracy or just make the Gold group wider, but if it does help, somebody on the ground observing if not actively working within the Gold group can be helpful and thus I raise the question.

**David Bellamy (Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office):** We just need to be clear, Chair, on a couple of things. Firstly, here, we are talking about response; we are not talking about recovery, which the Government guidelines make very clear is to be local authority-led and the London procedures provide for that. In terms of response, the GLA Duty Officer attends the SCG.

In general, those are done as phone calls because the partners within their own organisations. There is procedure for them to come physically together in a MPS facility should circumstances make that appropriate. I am not aware that that happened in the Grenfell incident. It was all done using telephone conference facilities.

It is important to be clear that the SCG is about bringing together the leadership of partners who are carrying out their own responsibilities. It is not about managing those and it is not on the ground. For instance, if you think about the police, they will have Gold, silver and bronze arrangements. The local authority will have similar and so the GLA is in there watching and being informed and offering help where we can at the strategic Gold level, which is some distance from being physically on the ground.

**Len Duvall AM (Chair):** Thank you.

**Andrew Boff AM:** Can I just get some clarification on that? It is the responsibility of the SCG for recovery. It has a remit for recovery.

**David Bellamy (Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office):** As we have said before - and John probably will come in in a second - response and recovery inevitably overlap. Perhaps in some of the terrorist incidents we have been unfortunate to see in the last year there was very little overlap because the actual incident was over in a matter of minutes and the response operation is over in a matter of hours and one is very quickly into recovery. Eleanor [Kelly] had personal experience of that with regard to the London Bridge attack.

For something like Grenfell, it is a lot more complicated. The response runs for a significant period of time and recovery starts underneath that. The process allows for recovery work to get underway and the SCG to have visibility on that. I do not know, John, if you want to add more on the technicalities?

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** If I could add to the complexity --

**Andrew Boff AM:** Yes, this is very complicated.

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** Yes. The SCG actually carried on beyond the Friday and it was chaired by the MPS at my request. The reason was we had a lot to do and trying to pull the recovery piece together. I talked earlier about the number of people involved in setting up the structures to now start to deal with things. The SCG continued to 22 June, if my memory is correct, at my request, led by the MPS. That was a piece around who is chairing and pulling together the agencies into that SCG. At the same time, there was a recovery co-ordinating group looking at the individual work strands for local authorities and other agencies. That gives an idea, Assembly Member Boff, again, of the complexity of this.

**Andrew Boff AM:** One of my concerns over this incident is that this is not easy and, when you are hit with a disaster or an unexpected event, you would expect everybody to know what they are doing and everybody to know who is in charge. Actually, I do not think that is the case. It is not your responsibility, but clearly on the on the resilience document it says that the recovery management protocol is usually activated by the chair of the SCG at the request of the LLAG. That suggests to me as a layperson that you do not need to talk to the particular borough; you just need to talk to the Gold.

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** No.

**David Bellamy (Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office):** Can I try to put that process in different words?

**Andrew Boff AM:** I am sorry if I am being stupid.

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** No, it is absolutely fine. No, of course.

**David Bellamy (Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office):** The SCG looks after the response. It is chaired by the appropriate body in terms of response. Initially, it was the LFB but, generally, when it is a major incident, that then moves across to the MPS. Initially, I guess in the situation of a 5.00am phone call, there was some thought, "We are going to need to think about recovery", but you are not really doing anything active about that at that incredibly early stage. Then what is going to happen is that the SCG is going to agree to activate the recovery procedures, which then provide local authority chairing of the recovery process. Then the chair of

that process, which was John from the Friday, is a member of the SCG and ensures then that there is discussion and alignment between the response effort and the recovery effort. At some point, the response work is done. In this situation, the SCG kept meeting on a less frequent basis for a week or so because there were one or two response issues still around; for instance, the reopening of the Hammersmith & City Line and the bus services in the area, and just to ensure that the co-ordination was in place while John led the recovery effort.

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** The normal process for this, as Steve [Hamm, Head of Programmes, London Resilience] would have said is that the chairing of the SCG does transfer when the balance of work moves from the MPS and the response across to the local authority. The difference here was given the volume that we had to do and that, frankly, I had to do, I had to spend the time available on the setup of our recovery work and the MPS on request continued to chair the SCG, although in reality the bulk of work had transferred across to recovery. It was pragmatic, frankly.

**Len Duvall AM (Chair):** I have just been advised why we do not have those minutes: because the Resilience group are checking with the MPS whether we can have those minutes. We need to clarify that the bits of the minutes we are interested in are in terms of the local government recovery issue, not the question about the police recovery issue with identifying bodies and part of their inquiries into the affair. I am very clear that at the time that you asked them to do that, that is when normally it would have been passed to local government.

When I asked this question, John, it was not some sort of political - with a small P - question. It was about workload responsibilities because it is quite onerous in chairing --

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** Absolutely.

**Len Duvall AM (Chair):** That is fine.

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** It was 500 staff, Chair. We are talking here of every borough providing staff and the entirety of managing government machine, which you will understand, the Mayor's office, which you will understand, as well as--

**Len Duvall AM (Chair):** That is fine. I am now going to ask Assembly Member Boff just to get clarity of the point. Can you read out the protocol? We have been clawing over bits of paperwork about the role of Gold. If you can clarify the role of Gold versus a local authority request for mutual aid, which trumps which?

**Andrew Boff AM:** I would love to read that out and quickly access it, but I know it is going to be hidden in here. This is an immensely complex thing.

**Len Duvall AM (Chair):** All right. We would like you to consider and maybe you can answer it because you live and breathe this. We think there is something in those documents that says LLAG can assess the situation and - if I can use your words - can support a local borough where the need is assessed that it is appropriate. We also see alongside that the request for mutual aid and so we think there are two issues there. Maybe we have misread it, but we had it quoted to us earlier on. We will try to find it and access it where we can quote it to you.

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** Sorry, that may be around the local authority resolution passed by each of the local authorities that talks about the two different types of event. One is a rising tide event. It came from the salt and the snow issues a few years ago, when there was insufficient ability for someone to say, "I am going to take your salt supply", bluntly. That gave the

power to do it on what was called a rising tide event, if things build up over time. That is not what we had here, clearly, and rising tide has a different --

**Len Duvall AM (Chair):** Very quick. It was a very quick time period.

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** It was a very quick time, Chair. It was a very quick time.

**Len Duvall AM (Chair):** It might have been a period but it was only two hours.

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** It is not designed for that. I am sure you would appreciate there is a piece here as well about the sovereignty of individual boroughs and other boroughs coming in and taking responsibility and direction for their staff and resources. That clearly is a matter for the individual boroughs, which is why it was written the way it was.

**Len Duvall AM (Chair):** We think that is very important but equally we think the support to survivors and victims is more important than sovereignty and boroughs. If something is going wrong, then the expectation from the public would be that you intervene to put it right and then we have an argument about sovereignty afterwards.

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** It is not about sovereignty, it was specifically about the question that was asked about activation.

**Andrew Boff AM:** There we go. The resolution itself.

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** It is in the resolution itself and it is exactly the reason we have asked for the review, because there was a concern about exactly the point you raised.

**Len Duvall AM (Chair):** Good.

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** The review is supposed to cover --

**Len Duvall AM (Chair):** -- because I thought we were putting it on the table.

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** No, no.

**Len Duvall AM (Chair):** Do you recognise that there could be an interpretation, we were right to think there is an interpretation, that could be placed on that versus the right of ...

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** There may be an expectation there. That is the point we need the clarification on. Clearly, part of the lessons learned needs to be that that is an expectation now that is available.

**Len Duvall AM (Chair):** We have talked about the review. Just tell us what the timeline of the review is and where that fits in with the public inquiry. Does the review come after the public inquiry or before? Are you going to take some steps before? We might come back on to that. You hold on to that and you think about how that works.

**Shaun Bailey AM:** Some of my questions may have been asked. Please forgive my ignorance because I am a layperson in all of this, but we have had comments about people wanting to see organisation charts. There were comments made by Eleanor [Kelly] that to me made it seem like some support was at quite a high level but was informal. We have just dug through a document where we were completely confused.

Is this review you are looking at going to look at what, to my mind - and again, please forgive me if I am wrong - is the needless complexity of this all? It strikes me that in a crisis situation, which this disaster definitely was, this complexity would slow your response. Of course, if people cannot find their direct responsibility they will take no responsibility because they realise what is coming down the line. I just wonder. Are you looking at these issues and - do not answer how we got to this point - how are we going to get away from this point? To my mind, this is needlessly complicated and will stop people doing stuff.

**Doug Patterson (Chief Executive, London Borough of Bromley):** If I may make an observation every Chief Executive in the country now will trigger whatever support they need very quickly. That is what going to happen now. Whatever is written in any protocols, the reality of the learning, the training and the issues we have had to deal with, particularly around the complexity of Grenfell, is the realisation, "Quicker, quicker, quicker". That is part of where we are just now. That is what we will all do.

**Eleanor Kelly (Chief Executive, London Borough of Southwark):** It is easier to step it down if you do not want it than it is to get it up if you are halfway through a problem.

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** The point is very well made.

**Barry Quirk (Chief Executive, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea):** Yes, I agree.

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** It is overly complicated to the layperson, who we are accountable to, and therefore it ought to be made simpler for us and for others to call us to account over it. The point behind that as well is that this is not an easy thing to do. From personal experience, it is probably the most challenging thing I have done in public service. The complexity - sorry, I am going to use the word again - of this means that I think you need to go through a degree of specialist training and experience to be halfway able to do this. Part of the work that we decided as Chief Executives to do a couple of years ago was to pull together an ability for seven of the Chief Executives in London to undergo more training and specific training with other services, including blue lights, to be willing to step into this kind of role should events happen like this. Again, part of the learning here is that we need to accelerate that process. Two colleagues here have offered themselves to be part of the seven to do that so that we can offer better-quality, more in-depth, better-trained leadership from local authorities.

**Shaun Bailey AM:** The one point I would make is to make sure it goes further down the staff ladder. One of the confusions on the night was that lots of external agencies - churches, mosques, charities - took the lead because there was nobody to tell them their behaviour was or was not appropriate or would or would not be useful, and that would never be at your level. You are not going to be directing those people. People further down the food chain would. I would make a plea that appropriate members of the Council staff get the training as well so that they can deliver quickly on the ground.

**Andrew Boff AM:** In response to that, we kind of have a commitment that your protocols are going to be reviewed. Is that correct? Are they going to change? Are the London local authority protocols are going to change? Perhaps from Mr Bellamy, can we assume that there will be some changes in the strategic

co-ordination protocol as well? Bear in mind this has to be used during a disaster and it refers to the same body with two different names within the protocol. That adds to the kind of confusion you really do not need. Can we get an assurance that this document as well will be reviewed in the light of the shortcomings that were demonstrated during the Grenfell disaster?

**Len Duvall AM (Chair):** They are one and the same. They have to go side by side.

**David Bellamy (Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office):** To answer the question, ultimately these processes are owned by the London Resilience Forum. That forum, as Steve Hamm said to you at your earlier meeting, is reviewing all lessons arising from Grenfell and will apply all necessary changes as a result of that. That process is underway. It will need to take into account what comes out of the peer review that London Councils have arranged around the mutual aid processes. That will need to go in. It also of course will need to ensure that the documentation is consistent with what legislation requires to be in place and Government guidance as well. I am clearly not an expert on these matters but those are the factors that the London Resilience Forum will want to consider.

All of us, whether it is resilience or whether it is anything else, always want documentation to be as clear and straightforward as possible, but at the same time you always have to balance that by ensuring the information is there that is appropriate to deal with the range of circumstances that cities such as London can face. That is what the forum will need to consider as it looks at the lessons and looks at how things can be improved.

**Shaun Bailey AM:** That may be correct but as it stands these documents are a hindrance to that. Nobody is saying that we do not want the documents, it just seems to me that this document is beginning to prevent the staff from exercising their duties properly.

**David Bellamy (Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office):** I am not sure that is the case. I have not heard any evidence here that would lead me to the conclusion. The conclusion that I reached around Grenfell was that while offers of support were made from local authorities and others very early on, the mutual aid was not invoked formally until the Friday afternoon and it should not have been like that. The mutual aid should have been invoked.

**Shaun Bailey AM:** We heard that people were involved immediately and that members of staff went down, a large group of staff went down and helped, so which is it?

**David Bellamy (Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office):** As John said, the point of invoking mutual aid is to bring in somebody who can provide a co-ordinating role for all the help that is being provided, whether that is formal help that the LLAG brings in from the authorities around London or whether that is help that is going in from local authority staff or others on a more spontaneous basis.

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** That is right. An indication of that would be the number of chiefs that were involved here. I dealt with the bombings on 7/7 and we used far fewer senior staff in the bombings in London than we did in this incident.

Just to pick up Assembly Member Boff's point, for absolute clarity, the resolutions of London Councils did work as intended. The issue was about the process for invoking them rather than those themselves. It is a very important distinction. The system that it is based on has worked seven times so far this year and did work in Grenfell. The difference here is that the circumstances were, as Barry [Quirk] has said before, unique. We have not had this scale before in London and the need for the invocation of those arrangements. How they are done is what we have asked for the review to take place on. Should that result in, "There needs to be a

change”, then that would be considered but we do not start from the premise that those legal agreements between councils are dysfunctional somehow.

**Eleanor Kelly (Chief Executive, London Borough of Southwark):** If I may, to address Assembly Member Bailey’s point too, as Doug said, for the Chief Executive, the first question that we are thinking of is, “Do I need help?” and ask for it immediately. Also, and it is a point of reassurance, all of the London Boroughs exercise their emergency planning arrangements all the time. That involves all of the staff, the people who would be called in as silvers, the people who would be called in on humanitarian assistance groups, the communications teams, everybody. They are exercised all the time, sometimes on desktops, sometimes with other agencies in much bigger exercises. We do not let the complexity of the legal arrangements or the complexity of the language get in the way of what needs to be done.

If you look at all of the other examples, the other incredibly unfortunate examples that there have been - as John [Barradell] said, seven incidents this year alone - Grenfell stands out as the scale of disaster that it was but also the issue that gives specific learning points that need to be picked up. In my experience, we learn from every single emergency and every single time we either train or have to stand up our Borough Emergency Control Centres. I just want to reassure you that it is not everybody running around not knowing what they are doing. Each individual borough exercises their arrangements with all of their staff on a rolling programme all the way through the course of the year.

There is another important point to be made and it goes to the complexity of the language, which is that with every incident you have the Local Authority Gold - in respect of the London Bridge and Borough Market terrorist attack, I was the Local Authority Gold - and you have the LLAG. At the time of the London Bridge and Borough Market attack, I believe it was the Chief Executive of Westminster. In my experience, every single time there is an incident the LLAG, who is on call, immediately contacts the Local Authority Gold, the Borough Gold, to say, “Do you need help?” There are informal arrangements but in a formal sense that question is asked very early on. In the vast majority of cases, you are in a position to say, “Not yet but we will come back if we need mutual aid”. That question would have been put by the LLAG to Kensington and Chelsea on the morning of the Wednesday. Just to reassure you, it works in practice and it is exercised to make sure it works in practice.

**Andrew Boff AM:** Are those calls logged, those requests to the Local Authority Gold?

**Eleanor Kelly (Chief Executive, London Borough of Southwark):** Yes.

**Andrew Boff AM:** They are logged somewhere?

**Eleanor Kelly (Chief Executive, London Borough of Southwark):** Yes, by the London Resilience Group, yes.

**Andrew Boff AM:** I certainly would like to see that.

**Len Duvall AM (Chair):** They will come out through the public inquiry. I think Members would like to see lots of information. If we can, we will, but in terms of what we need to do we have probably most of the information, albeit we would like to see the minutes of those local government recovery meetings.

**Sian Berry AM:** I have a couple of very slight follow-ups here as well. I am not completely convinced by the argument that we should rely on lessons learned and, “Do not worry, we will invoke it properly next time”, at all. That might be true for the current batch of chief executives, but memories are short and we do need to

look at how the system works and whether there are alternatives in the event that the local authority in question cannot or is not capable of invoking them. We cannot say, "They will just do it straight away". I do not find that acceptable at all.

The other question we have not fully got to the bottom of is that we have heard, yes, £100,000 can be spent and lots of people were offering advice but clearly something important was missing on the ground because of what David Bellamy said a little bit ago, that essentially the Prime Minister had a deadline and if on Friday nothing had been done the Prime Minister would have had to do something to kick off this process. There was something important missing on the ground and everyone was feeling this. This is true, is it not? I do not feel like we are glossing over that point at all. Who am I asking?

**Len Duvall AM (Chair):** To be fair, we have had the answers we have asked for. There clearly was a gap, call it what you like, leadership or someone taking and holding the reins. It is for others to work out whether that was organisational or not. In terms of what we said earlier, that crucial time compounded the hurt and distress of victims and survivors. That was quite clear for people to see on the ground but also people could see through their TVs that something was not right.

We have got to the bottom of the question of the procedures. We have identified one particular procedure about mutual aid, and when it is triggered. You make it very clear it was offered but when was the understanding that it was needed? Is that an issue about training or leadership or is it a question of the size of a borough? I do not want to get into amalgamation of boroughs or anything like that - that is another discussion for another place - but it does bring up capacity and the intellect to understand what you are facing and have to deal with. Do you want to come in and try to answer Assembly Member Berry's question?

**Barry Quirk (Chief Executive, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea):** As I said earlier, both the Leader of the Council, [Cllr] Elizabeth Campbell, and myself in very many meetings have said that the organisation of K&C failed people in that area. We failed them. We let them down in our immediate response. We have the deepest respect for the people in that area. They were let down at that time.

What we are talking about here is mutual aid and how it works and how, in a sense, we are doing this across London, but this is mutual aid not between people of equal capability and equal capacity. For example, the reason why Michael Lockwood [Chief Executive] of Harrow Council led on the Tower is because the dangerous structure experts in London were in Harrow. It was not because it just alighted on Michael Lockwood, it was because not every authority has experts on dangerous structures. What we have is networked capability across London that is different in different places. It is undoubtedly the case that that immediate response was a failure at the local level.

**Sian Berry AM:** Which the voluntary mutual support was not able to fill, such that there was an obvious gap by the Friday.

**David Bellamy (Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office):** You are quite right. That brings in the peer review that London Councils have commissioned. When I met, on behalf of the Mayor, those conducting that review I essentially put your challenge to them, which is that clearly the procedure did not work because it was not invoked. We are all around this table very conscious of democratic sovereignty and the other rights of individual elected authorities. However, whether an authority chooses not to invoke in a particular situation or whether it is a different sort of incident that perhaps occurs over borough boundaries, which the process is designed to handle, the Mayor needs assurance, this Committee needs assurance and Londoners need assurance that this is going to work and this problem is not going to happen again. That is the challenge that is before those conducting the peer review, to try to identify what changes are needed in order to achieve that.



To be frank, the Mayor will look at what recommendations they make and then the response of London Councils to those recommendations and want to come to a view about whether he considers that to be satisfactory or whether he needs to speak to Government about a further change being made.

**Sian Berry AM:** Thank you. The other slight gap we have in the discussion so far is in terms of communication, not the things you have in your binders and all the different groups you are talking to but from the ground. The example John [Barradell] gave a bit ago was that some people were sleeping on people's floors, some of them were in churches, some of them were in youth centres and places like that. How did you know that they were there? People in London on the ground need to know, in the event of something like that, who is the LLAG and the immediate response. We are just getting to grips with it after about three hours of meetings.

There needs to be something out there so that people on the ground who are caring for people, who are wanting to be part of the humanitarian response, who maybe have survivors, can feed that upwards. I found that completely lacking, certainly in the wider community. The relief centre was there but nobody could get in. You needed a wrist band. You had to be a survivor, a Council employee or a registered volunteer. There had been a system of registering some of the early volunteers. Nobody else could get in touch and say, "I am down the road. There are some things that need sorting out". I went in and had to try to get that information for people but even as an Assembly Member it was very difficult for me to know who to contact.

It is the simplest possible thing to solve, to have an emergencies system where somebody adopts an e-mail address that is a standard email address or a standard phone number that people can use in that situation to bring the information on the ground together. Has that been discussed in the review? I know that email addresses eventually were created after you took over, John. Is there anything you can say about that aspect of things?

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** Again, it is a set of lessons to be learnt. One of the things was that individuals, particularly local councillors, Assembly Members, the Mayor and local MPs, got casework. They talked to local people. They needed somewhere to park that and give the information across. You are right, we did create an ability to do that and had a number of caseworks coming straight through. In fact, from the Mayor directly, when he visited the rest centre, casework was created that we picked up. There are lessons and that has been learnt. Information down. Part of it was about getting the right management and the right oversight of the rest centre work. That is one of the first things that we did, in fact, to get one of our Chief Executives, Paul Najsarek from Ealing [Council], to take responsibility for the rest centre to bring that level of local authority gumption to try to get the processes and procedures in place. That was done, again, on the Saturday.

**Sian Berry AM:** That is very good. I am just thinking if something happened tomorrow. Setting up that page and communications system is something you could do right now.

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** Correct.

**Sian Berry AM:** You do not have to wait for this review. That is really what people need to know.

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** Absolutely. Also, I have to say there are another couple of areas here. One is around trust and foundations work. It is the first time we have done this in my experience, having a specific group who are working with the London Emergencies Trust and with the various other trusts and foundations, creating a network of experts in how money gets distributed and what the network is for doing that, donations and so on. That has been set up

under the City Bridge Trust director David Farnsworth, who has now logged that and has a protocol and a process for doing that. That was created from the Gold Group because it did not exist before. There are a number of areas, and communications is clearly one, where we are learning.

**Len Duvall AM (Chair):** We are going to be looking at that in the future.

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** We are learning that in due course. It is another example.

**Len Duvall AM (Chair):** Good. Thank you for that.

**Shaun Bailey AM:** Just a very quick one. There are two elements I want to talk about. Are you developing some kind of broadcast technique or protocol? What people need is access to quick information. The casework situation to me seems further downstream. In order to stop so many people turning up and quite frankly making the situation more chaotic, if there was some kind of broadcast situation other than watching the news, that may have really helped on the ground. A lot of people turned up and added to the pressure for the police and the fire brigade.

There is another thing around all the groups. Some of the groups are registered groups such as the Red Cross and so on. Is there a protocol for their touchstone so they do not add to the recovery rather than interfere with it because they are acting on their own belief rather than the belief that you and London Councils want? Does that protocol exist or is it being developed?

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** Two bits. I will take the last one first. The British Red Cross are part of the strategic co-ordinating group. Not the first strategic co-ordinating group; they joined a little bit later. They have an invitation to attend and they are the key link with the organised voluntary sector, if I can put it that way. They were based with me over that weekend. The Chief Executive of the British Red Cross was in the Westminster facility from then, from that point on, and as you know they had people in the rest centres pretty much all the way through.

They have also recently announced a process of encouraging local pre-registered volunteers. One of the early lessons from Grenfell again was that the number of people willing to put themselves forward to help overwhelmed whatever system was in existence. The British Red Cross have now come up with a community volunteer scheme to allow people to pre-register to help if things like this were to happen again. That is a very good, immediate -- I think they had this in plan already, but they have escalated and brought that forward in response to Grenfell.

**Sian Berry AM:** We are moving to the slightly longer term now, after the initial response has happened. Has the LLAG now started to hand back responsibility for things to the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC)? How much, and when has that happened?

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** It started on 8 September 2017. There was a work programme to get things in a state in both the handover and K&C's capacity to take over all of the work strands. I want to emphasise that a lot of this was already being done by K&C. There is a bit of a misnomer that K&C had no-one doing anything. Actually, a lot of staff involved in the care, the humanitarian assistance and the housing were K&C staff all the way through. What we did was to add to the capacity of K&C, but 8 September was when most of the work strands were handed across.

The first one that has been kept separate from K&C is the coronial support, the support for Dr [Fiona] Wilcox as she does the Coroner's Inquiry piece. Westminster is leading that as she is based over in Westminster. The site recovery, the site itself, as Barry [Quirk] said, has been kept separate for reasons that the Committee will understand. There is a process for that going forward. The third area is David Farnsworth's [Director, City Bridge Trust] on trust and foundations, now predominantly led, I have to say, by the Charity Commission. That was done to give a degree of independent oversight, hopefully with some degree of confidence from the community in that independence, to the charitable management of the charitable funds. The fourth area is the financial one of preparing the request to Government for support for local authority expenditure. That has been kept away at the moment as well, for no other reason than it is being dealt with by Westminster finance staff. They are the four areas that are still not transferred across, if I can put it that way. The rest went on 8 September.

**Sian Berry AM:** They all went in one go? Things like the rehousing support --

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** Correct.

**Sian Berry AM:** -- responsibility for the keyworkers, which we will get on to in a minute --

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** Yes.

**Sian Berry AM:** -- and the wider community organisation support? That has all rested with K&C since 8 September?

I am looking at this taskforce report, the Independent Grenfell Recovery Taskforce, which is - let me get this right - from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). They were called in on 27 July 2017 and so they were not there from the start. They have been looking at the recovery phase only and how well people have been looked after. This report is horrifying. The conclusions in it are just shocking, including about the situation we are in now, which is where a very small number of people have been rehoused. There are a lot of recommendations to do with better preparedness and training in the future but also the rehousing, the support for the wider community and the work on mental health support. All of these things say, "Start now. Start in November. Start in December". The report came out a few weeks ago. What can you tell us about this? To Barry Quirk, what lessons are you learning now about this? We are on the third phase of recognising that things have gone wrong.

**Barry Quirk (Chief Executive, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea):** Yes. First, I have to say lots of the recommendations from the Independent Taskforce Report we were in the process of implementing and in the process of doing. I accept entirely their recommendations about greater pace, and the need for frontline staff in particular but everyone generally really to be much more empathic, caring and compassionate in dealing with people who have essentially been through unbelievably traumatic circumstances and who are still now, and will be for very many months and possibly years, subject to trauma both at a family level and as a community. We are looking at trauma-informed approaches to how we work with survivors and also the local community. I entirely accept the report and entirely accept that we need to increase the pace.

The issue has been that, as I said earlier, that the Council's social housing stock is very small. From the time I have been there, I have tried to identify how we can raise resources in order that we can buy property. At the moment, the authority has committed £300 million, £235 million on capital and £65 million on revenue, in order that we can deliver services. Now, the £235 million is actually to buy properties. We are at the moment purchasing properties at the level of 30 a week in the West 10, West 11 area in order to rehouse people. I mentioned that at the time of the fire, the time we have been discussing, one in 20 of all of K&C's tenants

were in hotels. I mentioned that the turnover of the stock is so low that to try to find available social housing stock -- there have only been, I think, 11 voids in the period since then. People want to be rehoused in their community. Their community is in areas where two-bedroom properties are extremely expensive. That is why we are spending £235 million buying about 300 properties.

We had 100 or so at the outset in Kensington. It is probably best that I do not say exactly where they are, but we had 100 properties that we knew of - John [Barradell] himself was involved and we had lots of discussions with the Peabody Trust - and we are adding to those week by week. I will just check the numbers. There were 156 households that came from the Tower. This has grown by a third to 208 for completely understandable reasons in that there were many with multiple households in one property, as there are throughout London. There are 208 households. Currently, 36 have moved into permanent accommodation. Another 38 have accepted the offer of permanent accommodation and we are in the process of meeting lawyers and so on because many of them want to have exactly the same rights as what they had. We have made an absolute promise that when they move into a property that we offer them, they will have the same terms and conditions that they had in a Grenfell property. Where that has been a housing association property, we have to negotiate with the housing associations in order that we essentially buy that assurance. We are making capital payments to them in order that they can have that assurance. One of the issues of course is the right to buy. We are dealing with that issue with some housing associations literally at the moment.

So, 36 households have moved in and 38 have accepted an offer. We have 47 who are living in temporary accommodation. There are 110 in hotels still and 15 living in serviced apartments and so we have 125 of the 208 who are currently in emergency accommodation still. This is a council that has 2,000 households in temporary accommodation, one of the highest in London. Of that number I mentioned, that 125 who are either in a hotel or in serviced apartments, 34 of these households have children who are under 18. As of yesterday, 16 of these households had accepted offers that we had made. We are literally looking at this household by household, case by case, and we are saying, "What is right for people's permanent homes?" There is lots of coverage and commentary about this. It is absolutely critical that we bear in mind individual families and the trauma they have been through. They are having to make decisions about where they are going to move. In many cases we have made a number of offers to households and we are saying it is very much up to them as to what is the right, suitable quality of offer for them. The big issue for us is about housing, having properties available that are suitable and appropriate and that the households can choose to move into. We then support them moving in. At the same time, there is the issue about keyworkers.

**Sian Berry AM:** Can we pause that for a second?

**Barry Quirk (Chief Executive, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea):** I will stop there.

**Sian Berry AM:** We are interested in rehousing issues, but we are not asking for a progress report in lots of detail. We are trying to get to the bottom of what the problems were that meant that we are now getting a report on your rehousing progress that we might have expected in about September, not November. I appreciate that there are complexities but why has it taken so long to realise -- presumably you are out there buying homes now at market rates, effectively.

**Barry Quirk (Chief Executive, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea):** Yes.

**Sian Berry AM:** There are homes on the market all the time. Why was that decision not taken sooner? Has it taken the nudge from the Government review taskforce to look at that?

**Barry Quirk (Chief Executive, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea):** No, we were purchasing before. The issue really is the availability of social housing stock and the extent to which people from Grenfell Tower and Grenfell Walk wanted to live -- there are many people who want to live in the immediate area. There are others who do not want to live there while the Tower is still there, or who want to move from the area. Everyone has their own circumstance. Everyone has their own intentions. We have to work at that --

**Sian Berry AM:** No, I completely appreciate that the ability of people to make final decisions about the rest of their lives, having suffered trauma, is one of the hold-ups.

**Barry Quirk (Chief Executive, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea):** Yes.

**Sian Berry AM:** From what you just said, it seems like you are only looking at effectively social housing type stock. You are not buying street properties.

**Barry Quirk (Chief Executive, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea):** No, we are buying street properties. We are buying street properties at market price and we are then letting them to people as social properties.

**Sian Berry AM:** You could not have done that sooner?

**Barry Quirk (Chief Executive, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea):** No, I do not -- well, in my view we did this as quickly as we possibly could because we had to raise £235 million in order to do that and make arrangements for so doing, which we have done from the general fund, not the housing. This is another issue about the structure of housing tenure in London and the particular and atypical structure of it in K&C.

**Sian Berry AM:** Yes, the taskforce has talked about the bureaucracy and the fact that people on the ground do not understand why there are these delays.

The other thing I wanted to ask about was support for the wider community, particularly the recognition that the wider community were suffering from trauma too. Early on in the process, I witnessed a very poor attitude towards the wider community. This seems to now have changed to a recognition that this is a community in trauma that needs the ability to access mental health support, that needs community support, that needs to be given community facilities to build up their confidence again as a community. Can you describe what you are doing now about that and also how long it took before the NHS was properly brought in this kind of work?

**Barry Quirk (Chief Executive, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea):** I would say one of the first meetings I had when I was there was with the NHS Mental Health Trust because I was used to working very closely with South London and Maudsley (SLAM) in southeast London. I worked with Central and North West London (CNWL) and had meetings with the Mental Health Trust there, with both the Chief Executive and also people who were organising front-level support as well as the public health people who were doing work with the CCG and local general practitioners (GPs). I am impressed with the work that has been done in terms of the volume of work, the range of it, the reach of it and its accessibility. It may have taken a couple of weeks or so for people to recognise that there was a community dimension to this, not just a survivor and victim dimension, because we were providing outreach facilities in hotels and we had overnight arrangements on buses locally. There were lots of co-operative arrangements between RBKC and the mental health provision for children, families and survivors but also for the wider community.

I do know the level of resource has not in any way been constrained at all among the local NHS. I have been really pleased by that and also pleased by the response of other Government departments. I have to say the

Department for Education (DfE) has been supporting the schools locally. We have been making sure that it is not just the conventional settings like going to the doctor or going to the hospital, it is actually going out to people, being present in places where they are and also present in places where members of the family are, ensuring that there is mental health provision in schools, in primaries, secondaries and so on. It has stepped up the pace considerably.

**Sian Berry AM:** Just on that, finally, the need for it to be culturally appropriate and in different languages. That is one of the issues I have had brought to me. This is something that is being done now as well?

**Barry Quirk (Chief Executive, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea):** Yes.

**Sian Berry AM:** Quite late. Can I turn to John Barradell now? The final question I have in this section here is about the keyworker programme. The taskforce report here talks about the various attempts to define the role of a 'keyworker' and recruit appropriate people. This is a crucial thing and it seems like you were the person who set up the initial keyworkers, who were not quite the right people. Maybe you can tell us what went on there. There are basically three phases. We are in the third phase of keyworkers now. How have we got to where we are and what is going to happen next, and why did it fail? I have had, again, casework and reports of problems.

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** As I mentioned earlier, one of the lessons from this is understanding what the phrase 'keyworker' actually means to families and those affected and also what resource we actually have to ask people to be keyworkers. The pool that we are using within local government tends to be the housing officers, who have a particular set of skills, or social workers, who again have a particular way of working that may not be appropriate to the individuals they are trying to deal with.

The initial response phase was to try to get someone to work with the families in the hotels, to be a point of contact for them. What I believe started to happen - and Eleanor [Kelly] may comment because I know you have been speaking to quite a few families around this - was that from the responses they were getting, the requests that were being made were simply not coming back. The information requested or the assistance being asked for was not being provided. Whether that was that the systems were not in place to do that or whether it was that the individual did not know how to access them was part of the learning that was done early on. In fact, K&C produced a handbook for keyworkers fairly early on saying, "This is where you go for these individual requests". There is a lesson in that, as I mentioned earlier on, that we can do something about if we need it again. It is probably more on the police model of FLOs, which are very effective but are specifically trained and appointed for that purpose.

The second one on keyworkers Barry may want to pick up.

**Barry Quirk (Chief Executive, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea):** Yes. I do believe this is one of the biggest areas for learning lessons because when you have an incident of this scale, with this number of people who have gone through trauma and are bereaved, the needs of families and individuals change and develop quite substantially. We adopted this, as you said, from early September [2017]. We have changed the approach once because it was very clear to us in talking to survivor groups that the approach was inconsistent, that there were differences.

There are 154 keyworkers, for example, at the moment, and of them really two-thirds are K&C but one-third were pre-existing social workers at K&C. Another third have been hired. There remains a third of the support from across London because people wanted to keep their keyworkers. There are five from the Red Cross still

who are supporting people because the people they are supporting want to stay. They do not want to be passed to somebody else. They are confident in the individual who is giving them support.

A number of people want practical and financial assistance, help and advice about how to get housed, not just emotional or psychosocial support. That variety that is needed for keyworkers means that you cannot just have one generic worker that deals with everything. In some households, they do need a properly trained social worker who understands issues of trauma and understands how to deal sensitively and appropriately with them, as opposed to how to access finance, how to access housing and so on. One of the big areas for learning when you have large incidents like this is how you develop keyworker approaches and how it feeds into the police FLOs because they do work hand-in-hand in many ways that flow from the keyworkers.

**Sian Berry AM:** One thing you have not mentioned there is the role for them as an advocate.

**Barry Quirk (Chief Executive, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea):** Yes.

**Sian Berry AM:** Given you are saying two-thirds of them are still K&C staff, and who presumably were before the tragedy --

**Barry Quirk (Chief Executive, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea):** No, because we have hired the third.

**Sian Berry AM:** The point is that they are not the people that those who have this trauma are most likely to trust. They are also potentially not the people who have the skill to be able to stand up to the Council and argue against the things like the silos that appear in this. There is an advocacy role there that potentially is what John is getting at with the police FLO.

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** This is where, unusually, Barry and I may disagree. There are some lessons around advocacy in this particular incident that, again, we have not seen before where there has been a clear wish for people to get support in making their case to the authorities, whoever the authorities be. That is something I have not experienced before in incidents like this. It is not one that a traditional model of wraparound support would necessarily provide.

**Barry Quirk (Chief Executive, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea):** We are not responding simply to the needs of the survivors and those affected by this tragedy. We are having to respond, as an authority, out of duty and obligation because they were tenants of the authority. This is a really important difference. It is not just a needs-based response. It is one based on responsibility because, essentially, they were the tenants of the authority.

**Eleanor Kelly (Chief Executive, London Borough of Southwark):** Very much a learning point in relation to the keyworkers is, "Do not just hear what you have been told but listen to what has been said and understand why it is being said". There were lots of examples of people saying that there was a problem with their keyworker. What was heard was, "I do not like my keyworker. I want a different one". Therefore, giving people a different keyworker did not address the underlying issue, which was that the keyworker was not providing the support that was required. Very early on there was an issue that that was because that support, in some examples, was being given in the social care model which is about not making people dependent and getting them to do for themselves what they are capable of doing for themselves. It did not take account of the fact that in those particular circumstances, and given that trauma, they were not in a position to be able to do for themselves so there was no point signposting people, "Go here, go there and fill in this form". That is

one of the very human learning points in relation to the support that people need in their own personal circumstances.

Everybody experienced the same disaster but everyone experienced it in a different way. For me, anything I say in our organisation about how we will respond in the future is to genuinely, "Do not just hear what you have been told but understand why you have been told it and address the underlying reason and the real problem".

**Sian Berry AM:** This is clearly a very specialist job description that is emerging. You have all agreed on that. Can any local authority be expected to keep these people on the staff? Is this not a role for an external body?

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** I am now going to prejudge what we are saying, which is a very dangerous thing to do. I do not know any organisation that currently provides this, apart from aspects of it being the MPS and the FLOs. FLOs are police officers that are trained for this. They are not unique and they do other things when they are not being FLOs.

There is a model we could undertake that does provide training and experience for people, alongside their day jobs, to be able to do this. The key bit for me is understanding the needs of the individual and not trying to apply a single-size-fits-every-person in this. Urgent immediate support may be of that nature, but you need to do an exercise of identifying what the needs are. As Eleanor said, it is listening to what the needs of the individuals are. That requires a different response.

**Len Duvall AM (Chair):** The other model would have been the old type of social workers that used to do welfare rights and other advocacy issues, not just dealing with the issues of risk.

At this point I want to read into the record some transcript. This is not as a shorthand of digging out RBKC, but it is important about learning lessons. Any local authority that says, "This could not happen to us" is being complacent. I want it taken in that vein. I am going to quote the Grenfell Recovery Taskforce and I want it in our record so that we understand it when we come back to this issue of why. It talks about:

*"RBKC failed its community on the night of 14 June and in the weeks following. Prior to that we have heard that RBKC was distant from its residents, highly traditional in its operational behaviours, limited in its understanding of collaboration working and insular, despite cross-borough agreements, and with a deficit in the understanding of modern public service delivery."*

That is why I say we all, and any practitioner in local government, need to be reminded about how things can happen, be perceived or occur in reality. It further notes:

*"Residents speak powerfully about the disjointed nature of the response overall. It seems that this lack of coherent collaboration working across agencies is a long-standing weak point which the Council allowed to fester unchallenged."*

That applies to possibly a number of local authorities up and down the country, never mind K&C, therefore I want to read that in so it is in the transcript. It is for others to determine that, but it gives what the survivors thought of the situation they faced.

We are now moving on to a set of questions for the Mayor's Office. You can catch your breath. We are in the last phase, you will be pleased to know, of our questions.



**Shaun Bailey AM:** I will address this to David to start off with. Can you set out the role and responsibility of the Mayor's Gold Cell and the Mayor's Advisory Group as you see it?

**David Bellamy (Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office):** Certainly. If we look at the phases, they are preparedness, response and recovery. Preparedness is carried out through the London Resilience Forum, which the Mayor appoints the chair of. We have touched on that. Response is really where your stuff comes into and so I will come back to that in a second. Then there is recovery which we say is a matter for local authorities. There can be some involvement. For instance, Transport for London (TfL) could have some involvement in that if buses are needed or there are other transport implications to the recovery. However, in general that is a matter for the local authorities.

Really, it is focusing on response. The Strategic Co-ordination Protocol sets out what the Mayor's role is. The Mayor's role is to act as the voice of London, to provide information and reassurance to Londoners about what is going on in relation to what has taken place and that is being responded to by all the various agencies. The Mayor does not have an operational responsibility in any way for that although, of course, some of the agencies the Mayor has oversight and responsibility for - MPS, LFB and TfL - clearly do. Therefore, the role of the Mayor is to find out what is going on, to be able to communicate that appropriately to Londoners but, of course, at times there will be some matters that cannot be discussed publicly. Where advice and steer are needed, the role of the Mayor is to offer that in the appropriate private forums but again recognising that the operational responsibility sits where it sits and the Mayor does not have locus over that.

Having established that then the question is what are the internal arrangements we put in place in order to ensure the Mayor can carry out that responsibility. There are two things. First, the Mayor's Advisory Group. That is a concept that has been in place at the GLA for a number of years and it was under the former Mayor. That is about bringing the commissioners and relevant leaders around the table to brief the Mayor on their plans so that the Mayor can ask questions and satisfy himself that appropriate co-ordination is in place. We used that in May [2017] following the attack in Manchester when the country's international terrorist threat level moved to critical. The Mayor called an Advisory Group in order that all the agencies involved could brief him on the implications of the move to critical and on what they were doing so the Mayor could be reassured the necessary steps were being taken.

We do not tend to use Mayor's Advisory Groups for fast-moving, short-response things. A Mayor's Advisory Group is not appropriate for terrorist attacks where the response process runs for hours. The Mayor will speak directly speak to commissioners and others as appropriate and attend COBRA.

That ties into Grenfell where it was not appropriate to call a Mayor's Advisory Group because that would duplicate the ministerial meetings that the Mayor was attending in any case. All that would have done would have taken people away from the response and recovery operations. With the Mayor and myself playing a full part in those meetings it was not necessary to establish --

**Shaun Bailey AM:** Sorry, David, I would like to ask a quick question. When did a ministerial group start?

**David Bellamy (Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office):** The first one was on the Wednesday afternoon, the day of the fire. There was essentially one a day for the first few days.

In the case of Grenfell, it was not appropriate to form a Mayor's Advisory Group meeting. However, that is absolutely something we would do, as we did with the Manchester attack, when it is appropriate to do.

The other aspect of your question was about Gold Cell. Gold Cell is an internal group at the GLA that convenes in the event of such an incident in order to ensure the operations of the Mayor's Office and the GLA more generally are co-ordinated so that the Mayor can carry out his role as the voice of London. It consists of senior members of the Mayor's Office, the GLA Duty Officer - the link point, as discussed previously, to the SCG - the Head of Paid Service and also the Head of the Press Office for obvious reasons. The purpose and remit of that group is to support the Mayor and ensure all is in place for him to carry out his role. It is not part of the formal structure of staff but is something we have instituted because we found that way of working was necessary in the Mayor's Office so that we could respond appropriately to events as they unfolded.

**Shaun Bailey AM:** In view of the conversation we have had around the complexity of this in its entirety, do you believe the name of the Mayor's Gold Cell should be changed to avoid confusion?

**David Bellamy (Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office):** What is in a name? It is an internal group. For our own internal purposes, the name is not important, it could be called anything. The reason the name 'Gold Cell' was adopted was so that when the Duty Officer speaks to people in the emergency services and the other organisations, depending on the nature of the incident, they are able to say, "I need this piece of information from the Mayor's Gold Cell". 'Gold' is language that people understand and that helps the Duty Officer get the response they need. That is the theory behind it. It is absolutely not because the Mayor has no operational responsibility. We are always very clear on that.

**Shaun Bailey AM:** I do not say it as a challenge. That is not what I am getting at. I am desperate to make these things less complicated because I believe complexity stifles action. I just said that as something to be considered for you as a group.

What do you see as the Mayor's role in the immediate hours after an initial disaster? Obviously, we are talking about Grenfell. What did you see the Mayor's role as then?

**David Bellamy (Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office):** The Mayor's role is as the voice of Londoners. He needs to speak to and for Londoners, to explain what is happening and what action is being taken. Whilst the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA) still exists, nevertheless the Mayor has some responsibility for the Fire Brigade. Legislative changes are going through that will clarify matters there which is helpful. He also has a responsibility for oversight of the MPS. In both those cases he will be briefed, as he was through the night of the fire by the Fire Commissioner on what was going on at the scene. That is one of the reasons why on the Wednesday morning he visited Grenfell to be briefed directly by the operational leaders on the ground.

**Shaun Bailey AM:** David, we all agree that the Mayor has a role around communication and the voice of Londoners. After the fire was initially put out there was a large influx of volunteers. Do you think the Mayor could have played a stronger role in controlling and co-ordinating that? It strikes me that there was a communication piece there the Mayor could have spoken to. Is that lesson?

**David Bellamy (Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office):** The Mayor, absolutely, has a role in terms of communication in amplifying the messages from those with operational command. We have sadly had experience of this in a number of terrorist incidents. What you will see is the Mayor using the channels at his disposal to amplify the messages from the MPS, as the lead agency in that situation, to ensure they get across.

Where you are identifying issues around communication, yes, the Mayor can amplify messages where those messages exist. Some work was done about trying to create a single location on the web that would be a single version of the facts for people to look at and to point people to for assistance. As that was established

the Mayor was able to communicate that and help make people aware of it. However, it is for those in charge of the recovery operation to establish that stuff and define the message.

**Shaun Bailey AM:** I do not dispute that. This is not an attack on the Mayor. This is about lessons to be learnt. In the aftermath of Grenfell, the Mayor was most certainly one of the places that people turn to. A lot of Londoners arrived in K&C and it was not always helpful. They were not directed correctly. As a lesson to be learnt, could the Mayor consider that he could have been part of directing that effort in helping London to understand what that community needed so we all did not make up our minds up from all over London? That is the point I am trying to get at. Could you consider in the lessons you will need to learn after this - I do not mean you personally but your office - what and how you communicate? The point was made very strongly that this was unique. It was unique in one sense because of the scale. However, we will have to face some challenges and the Mayor does need to look at how he can speak to and mitigate some of the ongoing stuff.

**David Bellamy (Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office):** The issue with what you talk about there is that if the Mayor were to say, "I can hear from the sources of information that are coming into me in my office that there is no point in volunteers going down there, it is swamped", and so on and then the Mayor goes out and says, "Volunteers, do not go there", the Mayor has taken charge of an aspect of the recovery operation. That may be exactly the right message. It may be an unhelpful message. It may be that the message is more subtle and says, "We do need volunteers but we need volunteers with a particular skill set" or whatever it may be. That is why the role of the Mayor is around amplifying the messages that are agreed with the SCG working on the response to achieve their objectives. If the message is absent, then those with responsibility for the response need to get the message together.

**Shaun Bailey AM:** David, we are not asking the Mayor to make his mind up and deliver his message. We are asking the Mayor - to use your term - to amplify the message being given by the people who have strategic control. To my mind, in this instance that would have been very helpful.

To move on, what assistance did the GLA provide towards the recovery period? After the initial response what else did the Mayor provide in the recovery phase? Is there something there we could do more or less of?

**David Bellamy (Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office):** Clearly there were offers of help made immediately when we really were in the response phase. When John [Barradell] took over as LLAG, we said if there were any ways in which he thought the Authority could help then we were at his disposal and would try to do so. We provided help from the Housing Team. We provided a press officer to help establish a communications team there. We helped provide support in terms of community engagement, including a member of staff on secondment from the Assembly side of the Authority for which we were grateful. We also enabled Team London volunteers to provide some help for a period of time when it became apparent to John that that would be useful. That is a summary of the support we were able to provide. It was very much a case of, "John, what do you need?" and then whatever we were able to do.

Of course, a very important thing to understand about recovery and why the rules are set up the way they are is that so much of the skill set that is needed in these situations are skills that the GLA, as a largely strategic authority full of policy officers and project delivery officers, does not have. We do not have the same sort of capabilities as a typical local authority would.

**Shaun Bailey AM:** Correct me if I am wrong. My understanding is the Recovery Co-ordination Group leads on humanitarian response?

**David Bellamy (Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office):** Yes.

**Shaun Bailey AM:** I am right about that. Was the Mayor involved in this in anyway? Did the GLA offer any support?

**David Bellamy (Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office):** As I said, it was through, "John, you tell me what you need and we will see if we can provide it".

**Shaun Bailey AM:** To what degree do you feel that the GLA was involved? Did it actually do anything that you feel added value?

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** I can probably answer that, yes, they did. The Mayor's Office is a member of the Recovery Group anyway as well as being in that strategic group. Every request was answered affirmatively. That did include the London Ambassadors who were quite key in getting people out near to the rescue centre to be seen by the public. That was one of the comments that have come back, getting people from public authorities being seen. That was part of the role played.

**Shaun Bailey AM:** Is that how Team London were deployed?

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** Team London, yes, sorry.

**Shaun Bailey AM:** Again, my personal view on this is it is spread out in a very strange way. The huge leap to who is in charge and when and what kicks in is opaque and will be important going forward.

**David Bellamy (Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office):** It may help if I say to you what, to be frank, I said to the Prime Minister on the Friday at that meeting, "Somebody has to be in charge of it. John has been appointed. He is in charge. The job of all us - whether it is Government departments, the GLA or local authorities - is to provide John with the help he needs". In that sense, it was very clear and very straightforward. When John asked for help, for instance, from the Ministry of Defence on certain matters it was forthcoming. When John asked for help from the GLA, as we have discussed, we tried to help. As John has already set out he had access to huge levels of staff and support from the local authority community in London. That is the philosophy. It was very clear that John, as LLAG, took responsibility for leading that recovery operation and all concerned were providing him with help wherever it was possible to do so.

**Shaun Bailey AM:** That sounds great. Again, I am not trying to criticise. I am trying to understand. We could sit here and decide that it all went well and appropriately but it did not. If you are a local person it did not, it went spectacularly wrong. I say nothing as an attack. I am trying to understand what can be done.

**Len Duvall AM (Chair):** I will say something. It went very well from Friday onwards. There were still problems but, by and large, that is the crucial bit. The question for lessons learnt is how do we get that accelerated from the very earliest stages so we all have a level of understanding of what needs to happen at the right level and who is doing what. That is the crux of the matter.

**Shaun Bailey AM:** You are right, Chair. The Mayor made comments about him feeling it was going very wrong on the ground. Was there anything he could have done under his current powers differently to speed that process up, to give GLA resources over more quickly or to ask people to take action with their own resources more quickly? Is there something we need to have changed in the review that is being done or in our own practices to make sure we, quite frankly, do not fail Londoners in this way again?

**David Bellamy (Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office):** Offers of help were made from here from the get go, in the same way as were made from other local authorities. When I came out of the ministerial meeting on the Thursday afternoon it was abundantly clear - accepting things are always going to be difficult on the first day after the incident for obvious reasons - that the response and the beginnings of the recovery operation were not what they needed to be. Immediately when I came back to City Hall I rang John and said, "What is going on? What are you going to do about it?" Discussions were always underway, as has been earlier outlined, which led to the invocation of mutual aid.

For me, there are three lessons at a high level to be learnt from Grenfell. The first is that the mutual aid processes were not invoked early enough. They should have been invoked immediately. Clearly, we have, as discussed, the peer review underway to try to stop that issue ever happening again. The second issue - which the Chair rightly referred to - is that, with the best response in the world, pre-existing conditions in the community and the relationship between the community and its council can create a challenge that the theory of a response and recovery operation may not anticipate. We could have a perfect response recovery operation ready to go but it deals with real people and real situations and so we have to deal with that. The third high-level area of learning is about the resources that were available to LLAG to deploy and whether we have the right capabilities available to us. We have talked about one example in terms of liaison with affected families. There is a lesson to be learnt that that was not quite right.

I am sure the wider Resilience Forum will be going through lessons learnt from Grenfell, debriefing John and all the colleagues who worked for him - John, you might want to say more about this - and identifying what those particular areas are so we can try to ensure that for future incident somebody in John's shoes is able to call on the skills that are needed and that they are available to deploy.

**Shaun Bailey AM:** I have one question for John and yourself. Is the Cabinet meeting arrangement that happened the norm? Did that happen with the terrorist attacks we suffered, for instance?

**David Bellamy (Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office):** The Government meeting is completely independent from the process by which mutual aid was eventually requested.

**Shaun Bailey AM:** What I am asking, David, is whether that Government meeting is always called in an incident of this nature?

**David Bellamy (Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office):** This was a ministerial meeting. The fact that it happened was at the discretion of the Prime Minister. As I said earlier, it was not a formal COBRA meeting, although it did make use of COBRA facilities. The invocation of those procedures is a matter for the Government. Whether or not that meeting happened did not impact on the decision to invoke mutual aid. That happened before then. By the meeting on the Friday, at which the Prime Minister took the Chair, John had already assumed that responsibility that afternoon and attended the meeting by telephone.

**Shaun Bailey AM:** Again, I just want to understand the complete structure. Thank you, Chair.

**Sian Berry AM:** I want to ask about the casework side of things and the Mayor's Office's role in that. You described the Mayor as the voice of Londoners. However, what you have described is mainly him being the voice to Londoners. In the absence of people being widely aware of the fact there are LLAGs around the place, they will turn to the Mayor with their questions, practical issues and the information that there are 10 people somewhere needing help. That must have come into the Mayor's Office.

Are there any internal learnings you have about how you deal with the influx of communication about an incident and pass that on to the right person? I had casework that I passed on to the Mayor's Office and it made its way through eventually. I was not sure if that was the right thing to do but I guessed it might be and I think other people would as well.

**David Bellamy (Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office):** Firstly, internally to the GLA and when speaking to Assembly Members, when you are in a situation like this, the Mayor's Office is happy to help. You are quite right that the Mayor's Office, as the Mayor goes out to visit the scene, is picking up casework and he did pick up casework. That necessitates us opening up channels so that casework can be passed on and addressed by the relevant people.

In the sense of Assembly Members, we are more than happy to receive that casework and pass it through. If there is a message from the recovery operation about where particular casework should go to, then we would share that so that it could go directly and avoid the risk of any delay. That requires that the recovery operation has been able to stand up and create the structures by which casework can be dealt with. It is important to note there would be casework from those who lived in the tower, there would be casework from those who lived in the other Walks and were being evacuated further and there would be casework from others in the wider area. It is about John being able to create the operation to handle those and reflect the responsibilities that he had.

**Sian Berry AM:** We have used the word 'casework', but I am also interested in the fact that communications from individuals across the area build up a picture of strategic need. The Mayor would be in a good position to get the impression of what things were like on the ground in a way that people who were not on the ground and who were doing phone calls would know. That is another thing: we can all watch the TV but the Mayor might have been in a position to communicate that things were very bad on the ground. I know he advocated, for example, for things like immigration amnesties and that must have been as a result of being asked. However, there must have been more practical things on the ground.

**David Bellamy (Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office):** Absolutely. The Mayor went on the Wednesday. He went on the Thursday and spent quite a good deal of time there with the consequence that I attended the ministerial meeting on his behalf on the first day because he was at Grenfell and could not be back in time. The priority for him was to spend time with people there and to learn about the situation on the ground. Clearly that influenced things he would say publicly. It influenced his interventions in the ministerial meetings in terms of being clear about where things needed to be pushed. Through some of those meetings John would have responded to his questions directly. Then, yes, there would be matters that were more individual. That would have been casework that would be pushed through and handled in the appropriate way.

**Sian Berry AM:** The question is: did you do it all right? Was it all perfect? Would you do it differently if you had to do it again in the future? My original question was: have you learnt anything?

**David Bellamy (Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office):** It comes back to the high-level lessons learnt that I set out a few minutes ago. The time that was effectively lost by the local recovery operation not standing up in the way it did created very real problems. That meant as we were starting to get through casework and things, because perhaps people were coming to the Mayor because they had not had success on the ground, you found the operation on the ground was behind where you wanted it to be so there was not an operation to feed that stuff into. John and I were in close contact through all the days after to try to ensure we were passing things through and were providing the help we could whilst being mindful of the fact that John and his team had a huge operation to create the infrastructure that was needed from a standing start in the period after the fire.

**Sian Berry AM:** There was no problem with information passing through the Mayor's Office and no capacity issues? The blockage was after it went out?

**David Bellamy (Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office):** The Mayor had people with him when he went there. We were fortunate that members of the Mayor's private office have experience as caseworkers themselves. They were able to take down details and then it is a case of being able to route it through. As we said about the workers who were supporting the affected families directly, it is being able to route it through to somebody who could address the concerns. That was the real challenge.

**Sian Berry AM:** The emails coming into the Mayor would have been fire related at that point.

**David Bellamy (Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office):** I am sure there were some. There is a huge range of emails that come into mayor@london.gov.uk every day. As you know there is a dedicated team in this building who deal with that channel and where things need to be they are escalated up. As it happened, the GLA Duty Officer at the time was the Assistant Director with responsibility for that team. That helped provide good oversight that that function was working as it needed to.

**Peter Whittle AM:** It seems, broadly speaking, that the Mayor's influence is as an amplifier, as you put it, and a facilitator for better or worse. John, is there a structural way in which the Mayor's role could change in the sense that Rudy Giuliani [former Mayor of New York City] very much directed in some ways the effort after 9/11? I know the Mayor has particular powers and they are either great or small depending on how you look at them. Is there a structural way that he could be not just brought in, as it were, but direct things - I do not mean to make you redundant exactly - but to be more clearly defined as Mayor?

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** I would only go so far as to comment that clarity of role would be helpful. However, personally speaking, the view I would always take is that the Mayor has a significant democratic mandate. Therefore, if the Mayor said, "This is what should be happening, this is what I am hearing", that would be very significant in what I take into account.

**Peter Whittle AM:** Fair enough. Thank you.

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** It tries to give an answer without going too much into it.

**Tony Devenish AM:** This is probably a very difficult question to answer, but is the problem really that the public and the media confuse how government works in London because there are the three levels? Dare I almost say that the boroughs, in many ways, are the ones that need to take the lead, but everyone wants - whether it is the government of any political party, the Mayor or national Government - to take the lead and that fundamentally is the problem.

**David Bellamy (Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office):** What I would say is that the people of London should not need to understand the detailed structures of government. That is for us collectively internally to address. What this incident showed was that there was an issue where it did not work. That is why the peer review has been instituted and would look to address that. When mutual aid was invoked John took charge. Then, regardless of what the formal responsibilities were, we were working closely. As John said, where the Mayor had opinions on things those were passed on. Where John requested help or assistance from the Mayor or from the Authority, we would do so.

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** Can I make a point while not answering the question, Mr Devenish, in my usual way? I am not a czar. The role is not a czar. The role is a co-ordinating role of getting others to do, to talk to each other and get things done as per a plan, and encouraging them to be flexible, fleet of foot and adaptable to the circumstances. It is not a dictatorial Giuliani point, back to Mr Whittle's position, and nor is the Mayor's role in that sense. Part of the reason it works is because of that fact. It is about influence. It is about hearing and listening.

The other thing that was very different with Grenfell to what was done before was that I had what was euphemistically called 'my shadow'. The amount of work - and I called it 'scale' before and was rightly picked up on it by Assembly Member Boff - and complexity of this meant someone had to go and do the media, someone had to go and do the public facing role and, most importantly, go and talk to the residents and survivors. I could have done that - it is not my expertise particularly - but I am more of a spanner and I had to go and do the 'spannering', as I would call it. Eleanor [Kelly] volunteered to go and do that really important piece as a 'Joint Gold', I think the phrase is, to make sure that connectivity happened. Therefore, we did get the direct impact of the survivors and of people on the ground straight into Westminster, where it was being run, from the activity of Eleanor and others. It was joined up in that sense and we did get direct feedback, albeit somewhat anecdotally sometimes because of how many people were being met.

**Eleanor Kelly (Chief Executive, London Borough of Southwark):** You made the point, Assembly Member Berry, whether the information coming into the Mayor would inform what was really happening on the ground that John would not have been party to if he was sitting in a room and taking phone calls. One of the issues in relation to the delay from the Wednesday to when we took over was that, to my knowledge, the first meetings where people in authority from all of the agencies stood in front of the families of the bereaved and the survivors was the Monday evening. That was a meeting that had been arranged by the community. The first time that anyone stood up in front of the residents' association, and therefore all of the residents of the Lancaster West Estate, was on the Tuesday evening. Again, that had been arranged by the residents' association itself.

That is absolutely one of the learning points in relation to the impact of the delay. It meant that in terms of communication even those people who were really directly and traumatically affected did not have anyone in authority speaking to them for five or six days. That is a really important point that has been taken on-board. It is something we can recognise in relation to that role. If you are taking on the role as LLAG, if it is too big to be able to do that direct community engagement piece as well as the operational piece, then you have to have the machinery that works very clearly on that. The impact there was on that community cannot be underestimated. The Taskforce does not have everything correct in its report, but the point you put into your minutes is absolutely correct because that is what we were working with on the ground.

**Len Duvall AM (Chair):** At that point I am going to sum up. I have one or two other questions to tidy up issues on where we are.

I probably started out on this exercise looking at that period and what the triggers and protocols were. Whatever the protocols are - we probably have different views around here - the intended consequences did not quite work out right. I am quite clear the review is not just going to focus on that. It is going to look at the complete totality of what we are dealing with. I do not know how you put the issue of perception and reality operating at a number of levels into emergency procedures, particularly in the day of modern media communication. I am quite clear a number of good people were trying to do a good job, but it was not good enough. You can point to that. There were barriers there. I do not need a public inquiry to tell me that. Equally, there could have been some earlier interventions that may have given different outcomes, but we



might still not have had it right because there were protocols, as I think was alluded to about keyworkers and the understanding some of those issues.

One thing that will come out of this is that our knowledge and understanding about how we support victims and survivors is very crucial. We do not have it right. We did not get it right on 7/7. There still are lessons for police services about how you deal with victims post an incident, what happens to them and where they go. Finally, we may get something into our protocols about getting that bit right.

The review will end up amongst you officers, working people as you are, but will also go to London Councils and leaders. Should it not have a wider hearing and be looked at in a bit more detail? Are you going to test it on members of the public or potential survivors of different incidents? How do we get this out of our arena and into other arenas for a double check and what could that be? I am beginning to think one of the things we ought to do is that once you start looking at those changes - whether in London Councils or our Resilience Group collectively - we bring it back into this forum and go through with some checks on the criteria that has arisen from the discussions we have had with you. That would be a worthy piece of work we could do. Maybe we could do it jointly with colleagues in local government - but maybe not because it all gets too bloody difficult - but just get on with it.

Are you going to make changes quickly in the event of another emergency? We are not going to wait for a London Councils' decision to do it if something is not quite right and where there is some consensus amongst the professionals and experts? Therefore, those of us going away from this meeting today, and Londoners if they are listening or picking up on this tomorrow, will understand that we have made some quick changes because we think it is appropriate and there will be a longer-term view on the others because that is the way it is. What are the quick changes that will make a difference in terms of lessons learnt?

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** I can start with the last one and go forward, and then colleagues can comment. Doug [Patterson] said something earlier that is really important, that there is not a chief executive in the country that has not talked to one of us about our experiences and what it means for them. To answer your question directly, yes, it would be different. Colleagues at the end of the phone would understand the implications of saying, "I am OK, we can manage", because they know at scale they cannot. There is a bit of reassurance about that.

The full reassurance I suspect will come with the review. The review needs to go as well to the London Resilience Forum because it is managed under a deputy mayoral system, it will come no doubt to your Committee should that be one you wish to look at. It has implications for other agencies as well within the partnership. It is not only a private piece and it is not intended to be kept private, otherwise the lessons cannot be learnt.

I will take away the point around other groups to be involved in comment. I would hope Grenfell United, among others, would wish to comment on it to see if it addresses some of the concerns they have on how responsiveness works. I see absolutely no reason not to do that. We will take that away and look at other public forums.

**Len Duvall AM (Chair):** Remind me of the timescales.

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** It gets reported to the leaders in February [2018]. That would not stop any lessons learned being applied today, I can assure you.

**Len Duvall AM (Chair):** In terms of the issues you mentioned about training and the cadre of officers we need to cascade that down, what accelerators are there? One of the issues is testing the training. We have learnt that it works and makes sense. However, how do we get that across not just in terms of boroughs or other agencies but also some of those other agencies in the patch?

We have not talked about the role of the housing associations and them stepping up in terms of their role in emergency planning. Do we need to strengthen that? Do we have enough legislation? Should we be asking Government so that in times of woe there is a clearer demarcation about what the expectation is of these other agencies? They deliver important services in our borough, but they also have capacity. A telling point in this situation around immediate capacity on the night is that in terms of their tenants, in this case, their emergency plans needed to kick in albeit it was a borough crisis. What is your thinking about that? That is not going to go to the review group or is it going to be part of that? What is your thinking through that? What do we need to do?

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** I will speak to two things, and David may want to comment on the Government side and the involvement we have with reviews from Civil Contingencies and so on. The second piece on our review of what went on here, because of the public inquiry, has impacted on our ability to do the full debriefing on lessons learnt, going back and seeing who did what, when and why. However, it has not stopped the process of looking forward. The complication here is that the LFB is undertaking that process and that is due to happen.

On the training of the seven chief executives, we had our first bit of that last week. That has started and is being supported by the MPS and the LFB as well. That is ongoing. The colleagues have identified themselves who are doing that.

Besides housing associations, I will draw attention to another one. One of the areas we spotted - it was fairly obvious really - is the involvement of the private sector, particularly the hotel sector. In the system, there will not be the capacity, I would suggest and as Barry alluded to, of vacant properties or voids. Even if there were they would not necessarily be furnished or available for use. One of the things we are looking at is a system whereby we could have access directly to the hotel chains to understand capacity there for emergency accommodation, for example. That worked well when we spoke to the chief executives of the individual firms. No one refused to help with this. When you ring a chief executive suddenly things happen, which is really helpful. However, there are some lessons around that and similarly for other private sector organisations who could help. That is part of our debriefing and learning process but not the review. I agree, Chair, that is slightly different.

**Len Duvall AM (Chair):** Maybe you could write back to us about how you intend to take things that are outside the review but seem to be just as important in terms of going forward on how things would work.

In terms of structures we are where we are. We are working within the legislation framework. There are perceptions of leadership, whether they are powers or not. There is an expectation on the Mayor because the Mayor is a position. There is an expectation that we understand that delivery is with local government and that is probably the best place for it on those issues. I have nothing against government. Government is quite important and has a crucial role.

I do not need to be told by the Government where something is going wrong. There is something about the 'Feds' coming and taking another layer over. I am waiting for some bright spark to say, "What we need to do is rearrange these deck chairs and bring in a national emergency organisation". Personally, I want to resist that, I cannot speak for others around the table. What is the argument against that considering what happened?

Give me the argument. I am on your side. I want to be able to rebut that. I am a great believer that if mistakes are made you learn by them, you take them, get a grip and make sure you minimise them or they never happen again.

There are some issues about culpability here and whatever. It reflects on the local government family. The GLA might be a regional body but it is part of that local government family and so it reflects on us all. What is the argument to resist that? This has been tried and tested. We got some things right and some things not quite right. What are the arguments?

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** There are three. One, we picked this up as part of the review and implementation piece, was about where emergency planning and resilience sits within the attention span of leading members, chief officers and chief executives. The experience of those of us involved, and those of us not involved, in Grenfell and the tragedy there has said, "You better take this seriously because it is a very serious business". That is important because that then dictates airspace, time, money and effort and that the best talent we have taking this seriously and getting involved in it. The seriousness with which it is taken is the first defence, as it were.

The second one is the understanding that it is a collaborative and collegiate piece. No one organisation has all the expertise. You have heard about Harrow and Barry's [Quirk] comment about Mike Lockwood's [Chief Executive Officer, London Borough of Harrow] team. We have to share. We have to understand what is there and who is available to be used.

The third one is empowerment. It does not matter what organisation you are from, but it is having the support, understanding and knowledge of others and who can do the job. Those of us around this table happened to be around at the time. We have to make sure the capacity is in the system so the resilience is that it is not only us but there are others who can do it. That was the point of the seven.

Why not a national one? Local solutions are needed. The lesson from here is that understanding the local community and the needs of individual victims and survivors is what makes the difference to them, not some grand plan sitting on a shelf that someone can take and execute. That is back to your earlier point, that you write it in a way that it is accessible. That all speaks against 'Thunderbirds', if I can call it that. It speaks to local people and local resiliency on a street level. One of the things we have been talking about in the Resilience Forum is how to get communities to be resilient themselves, which means the volunteers that stepped up and worked doing it in their own communities themselves. It is not for any money-saving reason but simply that it is the way to get support into local communities. That is the switch we are trying to do.

**Len Duvall AM (Chair):** People who understand their role in those circumstances.

**John Barradell (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, City of London Corporation):** Exactly.

**Len Duvall AM (Chair):** I get that. The last question today is to you all. Lord Harris [Head of Review into London's terror preparedness], you will have to remind me about exactly what he said, but he said appoint a Chief Resilience Officer. It could be a title or an individual depending on the workload and what that is. What is the thinking of the Mayor's Office on that? Do you think it would help in terms of the co-ordination aspect of some of the work? What is the thinking on it? I am thinking I am looking at one of them in front of me. Do you know what I mean?

**David Bellamy (Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office):** Yes, I do. The background to that is that the Rockefeller Foundation has an organisation called 100 Resilient Cities. It goes around offering funding for a limited period

of time and advocating for cities to have a Chief Resilience Officer. Yes, there is something in it about response to sudden emergencies but a lot of it is actually about the policy thinking necessary for rising tide situations - which might be thinking decades ahead about flooding risk - for example or thinking very long term about the risks to a city's success if the housing market gets out of control, things like that. That is its perspective. That is the proposal that Lord Harris reflected, I think it is recommendation 127 of his 127 recommendations.

Looking at that, London has specific aspects of that. We have a London Resilience operation that is very strong and has been through a lot of things. Clearly there are always going to be things to learn and we have discussed particular aspects of that today. Also, unlike many cities where they have a city government that is about emptying the bins and providing those services, the GLA is designed to be more strategic and to think about some of those longer-term questions. Therefore, we may not be in quite the same place as other cities. Nonetheless there is something to this and we are looking at it.

As I touched on earlier, it now looks pretty likely that from next April [2018] LFEPA will be abolished and the office of the London Fire Commissioner will be introduced. What that means is the creation of a post for a Deputy Mayor for Fire. It is quite likely that that person will also get asked to oversee the resilience operation. Through that we will have that tie-in, given London Resilience is based out of the LFB. Therefore, really, we have been looking to get more clarity and, as we make that appointment, looking at whether we need a new Chief Resilience Officer, or whether it is an evolution of a post that perhaps already exists and it is more about subtle changes that go with that governance change. That is absolutely something we are considering, alongside ourselves as an authority, recognising our own internal capability to respond to incidents and the police advice - we have broadened this to look at the terrorist threat - that what we have seen in recent months is not a temporary spike in attacks but a shift in the threat pattern. Sadly, we can expect that to continue in future.

**Len Duvall AM (Chair):** We might write to you further on that because it might be something that is worth pursuing in terms of raising the profile of our response. Rather than a politico I was thinking more of an expert.

**David Bellamy (Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office):** Exactly, Chair. That is the point, it is the political leadership and then the expertise underneath that. That is what the Mayor's response to Lord Harris's report sets out. You may wish to review that.

**Len Duvall AM (Chair):** What we are going to do now is go back and look at the transcripts and the way you have answered the questions, and also read some of what we did in the past. We probably will be writing to you all at your respective bodies.

The reality of what happened in this terrible tragedy is that there was some good work done but, equally, there was some poor work done that had a greater impact on those survivors and victims of the tragedy. What we need to be clear on is that we are going to minimise or stop something bad happening in the future in terms of that recovery response. That is what we are going to focus on. We will come back to you.

I really do feel, on behalf of the Committee, that whatever may have gone wrong with Grenfell we ought to thank you for the work you do. I realise there are loads of people around this emergency work who are not in this room but you are their representatives. I have been surprised on a number of occasions how that local government family comes into play. This is official. However, I equally know about the informal side when authorities get into difficulty where people rally around with different expertise. On reflection, albeit these are difficult times and questions do need to be raised and answers found, we should thank you for the work you

have done in the past and will do in the future. I want to say that, thank you very much. We will come back to you.

DRAFT