

72 DEATHS

RBKC CONTINUE TO AVOID BLAME

HOW COME?

There is an answer to this question, but it is not a simple one to explain. Politics and law are often complicated; but what is truly disgraceful is how RBKC are trying to sneak decisions through that could protect staff and councillors who are responsible for the Grenfell disaster from any legal or criminal responsibility, as well make as other decisions they know we disagree with.

This is going to be a long post but I can promise everyone that it is a VERY important one.

PLEASE READ THIS IF YOU CARE ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS TO OUR COMMUNITY AND WANT TO ENSURE THAT RBKC WILL BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE BY THE POLICE INVESTIGATION AND THE PUBLIC INQUIRY.

Many of the councillors who are responsible for the Grenfell disaster are about to make some important decisions that will serve THEIR interests – decisions that seem designed to help them avoid criminal responsibility from the police investigation and any blame from the Grenfell public inquiry.

Whatever people may think of the RBKC Grenfell Recovery Scrutiny Committee, at least it was held in the local area and advertised to people what it would be discussing. Many locals used those meetings as an opportunity make their feelings known to RBKC staff and councillors about the disaster, and the fact that warnings made by many members of our community about the risks RBKC were taking with our safety for years before Grenfell Tower burned were ignored and even ridiculed.

However the Scrutiny Committee isn't where the power lays or decisions are made at RBKC, the RBKC Leadership Team is actually where all of this is. The Leadership Team should be where the community focuses its effort and attention.

Look at who is on the RBKC Leadership Team and what they are responsible for:

<https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/how-council-works/making-decisions/leadership-team>

The Leadership Team makes ALL of the major decisions about EVERYTHING in RBKC – decisions regarding the Grenfell recovery effort, decisions regarding the future of KCTMO, decisions regarding how RBKC respond to the police and public inquiries, decisions regarding where money is spent in the borough and how much we are taxed – all of these and many more are taken by the Leadership Team.

Look at what the Leadership Team made decisions about during their meeting on 6th February:

<https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/committees/Meetings/tabid/73/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/669/Meeting/7635/Committee/1582/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx>

Decisions were made about KCTMO, resuming rent charges for Lancaster West Estate, how former Tower residents are looked after, , and the rehousing policy.

Now look at what the Leadership Team made decisions about during their meeting on 26th February:

<https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/committees/Meetings/tabid/73/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/669/Meeting/7614/Committee/1582/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx>

Decisions were made about spending on ALL council services – schools, social services, libraries, rubbish collection, streets, and parking to name a few – EVERYTHING that RBKC provides and EVERYWHERE it is provided from (such as Wornington College and North Kensington Library) was agreed at that meeting.

The decisions highlighted above are just some of those we ALL feel strongly about, yet RBKC has been making them in such a sneaky way that most residents never even realised when, where, and how they were being made.

If that wasn't bad enough, look at what decisions the Leadership Team will be making at its next meeting on 22nd March:

<https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/committees/Meetings/tabid/73/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/669/Meeting/7608/Committee/1582/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx>

They are planning to make decisions about issues including how local businesses affected by Grenfell will be treated, awarding funding to reduce youth crime rates to an outside organisation rather than somewhere like Harrow Club, and funding decisions about the Carnival.

But that's not the worst of it - the sneakiest and most self-serving decision they will be taking on 22nd March will allow them to spend MILLIONS on expensive law firms to "advise" them on how to respond to the Grenfell criminal investigation and the public inquiry.

If RBKC have nothing to hide then they have nothing to fear – so why do they need to spend so much on legal advice about how they should respond to any questions they are asked by the police or public inquiries? RBKC have a huge internal legal department staffed by qualified legal experts with many hours of court experience so why do they need to spend more on external legal advice?

The budget for INTERNAL legal services at RBKC is already over ONE MILLION POUNDS per year.

Yet RBKC HAVE ALREADY SPENT OVER TWO AND A QUARTER MILLION POUNDS in addition on EXTERNAL legal services since the fire - £2,263,512.44 as of 22nd February 2018 to be precise - NOW WANT TO SPEND OVER THREE AND A HALF MILLION POUNDS MORE.

RBKC didn't want to spend an extra FIVE THOUSAND POUNDS on safer cladding when they "regenerated" Grenfell Tower, yet now they are happy to spend almost SIX MILLION POUNDS on EXTERNAL legal services, in addition to their existing internal budget for legal services, before they respond to questions they are asked by two investigations into that fire.

Why does being open and honest with those investigations require so much money for legal services, especially external legal services?

Does it really cost so much money to simply tell the truth?

Councillors who fear facing criminal charges or legal responsibility for their decisions or actions before Grenfell are desperate to get this all agreed at the 22nd March Leadership Team meeting as they know this is their best chance of avoiding ANY blame or responsibility – and using OUR tax money to do this.

We want EVERYONE, not just RBKC, to be open and honest with ALL investigations into this disaster; not just for our own sakes and our own peace of mind, but also to ensure that no one else has to suffer what we have endured since 14th June 2017 and will affect for the rest of our lives.

They seem to have already forgiven themselves for the Grenfell disaster and want to spend £6 million to ensure they face no punishment.

This is NOT justice and it is NOT what residents want.

We need to remind them of their promises to be more open and honest.

THE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING AT 6:30PM AT THE TOWN HALL ON THURSDAY 22ND MARCH COULD BE OUR LAST CHANCE TO DO THIS – WE MUST ENSURE IT IS NOT WASTED.