

On 14 March the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) launched a consultation on the cross government Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper. The consultation ends on 5 June and is open to everyone. The Government is keen to hear from a wide range of interested parties, including those who work with migrant groups and resident communities. You can view the paper [here](#). The Integrated Communities Strategy green paper invites views on the government's vision for building strong integrated communities where people – whatever their background – live, work, learn and socialise together, based on shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities. Lincolnshire County Council's Community Engagement Team has been tasked by the Public Protection and Communities (PP&C) Scrutiny Committee to co-ordinate a response on behalf of the authority. The Team is therefore seeking your views and contributions; after which we will collate and pass on to Democratic Services to share with PP&C Scrutiny Committee members for their contribution and comment. Please, therefore add to the responses highlighted in yellow below by 18 May to allow time for the response to be collated and shared before submission.

Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper - Background

- Britain is a great place to live and is a well-integrated society on the whole. However, we cannot ignore the fact that in too many parts of our country communities are divided.
- This reduces opportunities for people to mix with others from different backgrounds, allows mistrust and misunderstanding to grow, and can prevent people in isolated communities from taking advantage of the opportunities that living in Britain offers.
- The Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper invites views on the Government's vision for building strong integrated communities where people – whatever their background – live, work, learn and socialise together, based on shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities.
- The Green Paper sets out an ambitious programme of actions to deliver this vision at the local and national level. You and your community have an important part in shaping the strategy and delivering this vision.

The Consultation

- The consultation will end on 5 June 2018.
- This consultation is open to everyone. The Government are keen to hear from a wide range of interested parties from across local government, in the faith, voluntary, community and business sectors, and the general public.

Introduction: Building Integrated Communities

Question: We define integrated communities as communities where people - whatever their background – choose to live, work, learn and socialise together, based on shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities.

Do you agree with our definition?

Response: We agree with the definition in principle; however we would suggest the shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities is an outcome rather than a definition. Also, the Green Paper is heavily focused towards the integration of recent migrants or communities of different faith/background. In Lincolnshire we have a number of vulnerable groups and marginalised communities which don't necessarily fit the detail provided in the Paper. For example, communities living on the east coast which have higher levels of deprivation due to low incomes/lack of job opportunities; our increasing elderly population who are becoming lonely and isolated; and issues relating to intergenerational integration. Consideration should also be given to individuals who do not want to integrate – should there be an element of choice?

Question: We believe that the varied nature and scale of integration challenges means that tailored local plans and interventions are needed to tackle the issues specific to particular places. **Do you agree?**

Response: Yes, it needs to be tailored and specific to the local community, but there is learning that can still be shared amongst communities facing similar challenges. Blanket approaches can only be applied by having very broad definitions that risk not being able to be operationalised in any meaningful sense, unless made very specific to the nature and scale of the challenges of particular localities.

The varied nature and scale of integration challenges means that tailored local plans and intervention are needed. Each upper tier authority, through the Health and Wellbeing Board, already has a statutory responsibility to publish a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) which details the needs of the local population, now and in the future. The JSNA provides an evidence based resource covering a range of health, wellbeing and wider determinant issues – whatever local plans are produced need to be developed using the JSNA as the evidence base.

Question: Do you have any examples of successful approaches to encourage integration that you wish to highlight, particularly approaches which have been subject to evaluation?

Response: We are currently running 'Join the Dots' community events which have not yet been evaluated, but will be happy to share learning when this is undertaken in June 2019.

Strengthening Leadership

Our ambition is that challenging segregation and promoting integration should sit at the heart of all policy and public service delivery. We want all leaders in national and local government, and in the faith, voluntary, community and business sectors, to work in partnership and have the confidence to champion our shared values.

To **strengthen leadership to drive integration** in policy development and service delivery, we will:

- call on public authorities to include an equality objective outlining specific activity to promote integration;
- select a number of priority policies and services to review across government to determine how they might best drive integration;
- call on local government and business, and voluntary and community sector organisations to commit to doing the same;
- support the new Cohesion and Integration Network to enable it to identify best practice on leadership and to share this widely.

Question: The Green Paper proposes that we need to build the capacity of our leaders to promote and achieve integration outcomes. **Do you agree?**

Response: We agree that the capacity of our community leaders needs to be enhanced and supported. Organisational leaders will need to develop skills as well in cross boundary leadership, influence and delivery rather than measuring success in a traditional way which focuses on individual organisational/departmental performance.

Supporting New Migrants and Resident Communities

We want all people who come from outside the UK and wish to settle lawfully in this country to play a full part in our society and to make the most of the economic and social opportunities available to them. Local resident communities share a responsibility for the effective integration of recent migrants.

To **support newly arrived migrants to integrate** and improve communities' ability to adapt to migration, we will:

- review the impact of English language requirements on visas, introduced in 2017, and review the potential for further change in the English language requirements in future;
- review the Life in the UK test and whether it could be amended to strengthen its focus on the values and principles of the UK which we expect all people to live by;
- consider providing information to prospective migrants before they arrive in the UK, to give them a clear expectation about life in modern Britain, including our laws, norms and standards;
- provide a package of information for recent migrants in the Integration Areas to test what is most helpful to support them to integrate into their communities and to build an understanding of life in the UK;
- work with civil society and others to increase the integration support available to help refugees overcome the barriers to integration.

Supporting New Migrants and Resident Communities (Cont.)

Question: The Green Paper proposes measures to support recent migrants so that they have the information they need to integrate into society and understand British values and their rights and responsibilities. **Do you agree with this approach?**

Response: Although we agree with this approach, we question the term 'British Values'. Whilst there is a need to be specific about British law, we should be promoting 'shared values'?

Local Registration Services have provided support to migrants on their route to British Citizenship for a number of years. This is via support with a Nationality Checking Service, Settlement Checking Service, European Passport Return Service, Joint Citizenship and Passport Application Service and a Nationality Document Return Service. In addition the facilitation and hosting of Citizenship Ceremonies as part of the Registration Service Statutory Services has been incredibly well received by citizenship recipients, evidenced by customer feedback.

Question: The Controlling Migration Fund was constructed to deal with the short-term migration pressures and associated costs that local authorities can encounter. **Do you think it adequately achieves this objective?**

Response: Partly, as we could only assume that projects receiving funding will achieve the objectives of the fund.

Are there opportunities to extend this to all Citizens or residents, perhaps as a coming of age/rite of passage for young adults. Many other countries support civic and national pride and this could be demonstrated at these events. If attended by parents, siblings and grandparent these events could be celebrated across multiple generations.

In addition Local Authorities can play an important role in extending a warm welcome to European residents following confirmation of the route or application for residency after Brexit.

Education and Young People

All children and young people in England should receive a good education in a safe environment which prepares them for life in modern Britain. They should have the opportunity to mix and form lasting relationships with others from different ethnic, religious or socio-economic groups so they are well equipped for life.

To **make sure all children and young people are prepared for life in modern Britain** and have the opportunity for meaningful social mixing with those from different backgrounds, we will:

- work with local admission authorities in the Integration Areas to help ensure the intake of schools are more representative of the wider area; • strengthen expectations on integration for new free schools;
- promote mixing and twinning arrangements between schools in areas of high segregation;
- support teachers to promote British values across the curriculum;
- work with Ofsted to ensure that there is strong coverage of schools' promotion of fundamental British values and integration within its new inspection arrangements;
- ensure a high standard of safeguarding in all education settings;
- work with the National Citizen Service to increase young people's mixing in areas of high segregation, and stimulate other innovative approaches to promoting meaningful social mixing.

Education and Young People (Cont.)

Question: The Green Paper proposes measures to ensure that all children and young people are prepared for life in modern Britain and have the opportunity for meaningful social mixing with those from different backgrounds. **Do you agree with this approach?**

Response: Although we agree with the approach, we question what is meant by 'meaningful social mixing' and what this means to a young person. All schools should already be achieving this measure. It is important to include mixing children with a range of abilities and disabilities, not just different ethnic or religious backgrounds.

The paper proposes to increase diversity in schools via changes to the admissions process. Whilst well-meaning this might prove problematic as the outcomes are equally vague and ambitious. The government must define precisely what is meant by 'diversity,' and 'increasing it' before attempting to bring about change. Admissions arrangements are inter-dependent and very context specific, changes made can have many consequences. Alternative approaches are already being tested to increase diversity.

The majority of schools work hard to teach an understanding of, and a respect for, other faiths and cultures for life in modern Britain, however, immigration in both politics and the press run counter to these lessons. This negativity feeds further division. New approaches to teaching religious education (RE) in schools could support the renewed focus on British values, offering all students the opportunity to learn from, and relate to, their peers. Whilst RE is part of the basic curriculum in all state-funded schools, it is not on the National Curriculum, so parents and carers can withdraw their children.

Funding will be vital to achieving any of this and the current envelope is insufficient so resources would need to be increased from government before considering a new approach.

Question: The Green Paper sets out proposals to support parents with their choice of out-of-school education settings. **Do you agree with this approach?**

Response: Although we agree with the approach, there is insufficient clarity about what support means and how this will be offered to parents/carers. Will this be simply signposting to existing opportunities and support groups or something more meaningful? It is vital that children meet their potential so all schools would need to be monitored so there is confidence that this is the case. There is no ability under current legislation to do this.

More specifically, consultation on supplementary schools in early 2016 supporting light-touch regulation will give an idea of views on this matter. Although local authorities recognise the value of this provision and many already work collaboratively with school leaders, it is likely that there are schools operating under the radar. Several recognised quality assurance schemes already exist so it's unclear what the added value of some of these new measures will be, particularly if funding to create the capacity to identify and tackle concerns is not forthcoming. We are aware of such schools in our county, but do not know how many supplementary schools there are more broadly in England, making any changes in duties a significant new burden for education authorities with diverse local populations.

Similarly the DfE has released two recent consultations on related matters. Unregistered schools operate on a full-time basis under the guise of part-time provision (supplementary schools). As part-time schools are not obliged to register, local authorities cannot assure themselves that children attending them are safe, well and receiving a broad and balanced education. The DfE is responsible for the registration of independent schools. The proposal in this Green paper to review current procedures, including regulatory regime for independent schools that fail to meet the required standards, is welcome, however, the government must go further and robustly challenge any lack of compliance.

Boosting English Language

Everyone in England should be able to speak and understand English so they can integrate into life in this country.

To **boost English language skills** – which are fundamental to being able to take advantage of the opportunities of living in modern Britain such as getting a job, mixing with people and playing a full part in community life – we will:

- propose developing a new strategy for English Language in England;
- launch a new community-based English language programme;
- work with local authorities in the Integration Areas to improve the provision of English language learning and establish a new infrastructure fund open to other local authorities;
- facilitate a new network of community-based conversation clubs

Questions: The Green Paper proposes a number of measures to improve the offer for people to learn English. **Do you agree with this approach?**

Response: Yes we agree, subject to there being sufficient funding and resources in place.

Question: Do you have any other suggestions on how we can improve the offer for people to learn English?

Response: Engage with communities who would use this service in order to achieve best design for all ages. The initiatives should be led by communities, or at the least co-produced with them. ESOL and similar services have been reduced/removed altogether and this is bound to have had an impact. Support people whose first language is not English to engage fully in their local community and consider how to engage the wider community and citizens in supporting and integrating with each other. Community

facilitators and Community connectors can assist and support with this as well as utilising voluntary and community organisations.

Places and Community

Everyone should feel comfortable living alongside and mixing with people from different backgrounds. We want to see vibrant communities in which everyone plays a part and for people from all backgrounds to have access to, and make use of community hubs where they can come together with people from different backgrounds around shared activities.

To **mitigate residential segregation** and support people to build strong and integrated communities, we will:

- take forward a programme of work to determine what changes to housing policy and practice would help in addressing residential segregation;
- challenge libraries and other community hubs to maximise their contribution to building integrated communities;
- issue revised guidance on how community groups can bid to take over the running of valued local assets;
- work with the Parks Action Group on how to enhance the sustainability of parks and green spaces and how they can best promote integration.

Question: The Green Paper proposes measures to ensure that people, particularly those living in residentially segregated communities, have opportunities to come together with people from different backgrounds and play a part in civic life. **Do you agree with this approach?**

Response: Although we agree with the approach, we envisage significant challenges with this approach, such as:

- Insufficient flexibility in housing stock
- No consistency in social mobility
- A significant number of libraries and community hubs are no longer under local authority control. They rely on volunteers, should we support and develop rather than challenge
- Real integration requires sustained/on-going opportunities – a reliable venue or calendar of regular activities, for example playgroups to allow early mixing/understanding, women's groups that enable everyone to attend freely, and frequent events that are timed with/allow celebration of culture etc, not just 'one offs'

Community cohesion programmes led by local people who live within their communities and neighbourhoods, using existing community leaders to bring communities together are required

Increasing Economic Opportunity

Everyone, no matter what their background, level of educational attainment, or where they live, should have the opportunity to upskill and reskill into the jobs of the future. Work and progression in work supports integration by increasing the size and diversity of our networks and brings confidence and a sense of belonging.

To **increase economic opportunity**, we will:

- provide additional funding to Jobcentre Plus so they can support more people from the most segregated communities into work in the Integration Areas;
- use the opportunity of Universal Credit to engage people who are economically inactive to help them realise their potential through pathways to work;
- support people from ethnic minorities into work in places where there remains a big gap between their employment rates and that of White British people;
- increase take up of apprenticeships and the early years offer by people in isolated communities.

Question: The Green Paper proposes measures to provide tailored support to people, especially those who may not currently be active in the labour market, to build their confidence and skills to take up employment. **Do you agree with this approach?**

Response: Although we agree with the approach, those living in rural and sparse areas of Lincolnshire might face significant challenges to attend and sustain such support and employment. There has been a plethora of employment support, tailored to the needs of different groups in society, which was often disjointed and double funded and we believe those services that worked well can share learning to enhance this service while ensuring it doesn't make the same mistakes as previous initiatives. Use community businesses and organisations to engage with the process of out-reach to their localities. Make full use of statutory organisations to work with local schools and communities as ambassadors for change. Identify people who have been successful in these areas to go and speak to local people at a peer promotion/champion/ambassador level.

Rights and Freedoms

We believe in a society based on shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities in which we respect and promote equal rights, particularly for those in isolated and segregated communities whose voices are too seldom heard.

To **challenge the practices that can hinder integration and equal rights**, we will:

- empower marginalised women, including exploring limited reform of the law on marriage and religious weddings;
- improve our understanding of the ways in which overseas influences can undermine attitudes to rights and freedoms in the UK;

- expand the Strengthening Faith Institutions programme to help a wider range of faith institutions to strengthen their governance structures, including the participation of women and young people;
- support faith communities and interfaith dialogue as a means of breaking down barriers between communities, building greater trust and understanding, and removing the conditions which can allow intolerance and unequal treatment to flourish;
- support delivery of the Hate Crime Action Plan in the Integration Areas, strengthening local partnerships to identify innovative practices to address hate crime and promote greater reporting of incidents.

Question: The Green Paper proposes measures to encourage integration and resist divisive views or actions. **Do you agree with this approach?**

Response: Yes, but care needs to be taken not to conflate culture, traditions, values and Law. Where it can be carefully implemented, use existing community leaders to take an active role in this and also consider entering schools and community groups to build on the suggested programme. Existing legislation can and does often work well; it is our general experience that the current provisions can be used without resorting to further measures.

In relation to exploring limited reform of the law of marriage:

Yes, protection of any individual who is disadvantaged and/or marginalised is important. Improved training for all staff to support vulnerable or isolated individuals is important and could be further enhanced. Raising awareness of the impact of non-legal ceremonies in local communities, where the couples later separate, would also support the legal formation of marriage as defined in current law. The Local Registration Service is committed to upholding the highest level of integrity in the delivery of pre-marriage formalities and ceremonies.

Question: The Green Paper proposes measures to address practices which can impact on the rights of women. **Do you agree with this approach?**

Response: Yes, this should relate to all women and not just marginalised women, in fact measures to address practices which impinge on the equity of opportunity for any group of community should be considered. Specific to women - invite female community leaders and business women to mentor/buddy women.

Measuring Success

Measuring progress and sharing evidence of what works is important for strengthening community integration and enabling us to learn and build upon our successes.

To **learn what works** in building integrated communities and to **share that learning**, we will:

- undertake a programme of evaluation research in the Integration Areas to generate evidence of what works in different local area settings;
- improve the way knowledge of what works is promoted and shared so that it reaches the people who need it;
- develop a clear set of integration measures at the local and national level so that policy makers and practitioners can monitor and measure progress.

Question: The Green Paper proposes core integration measures for national and local government to focus on. **Do you agree these are the right measures?**

Response: We agree with the measures, but must be aware of potential unintended consequences. It is vital that there is a shared vision of what success looks like and this must be community-focussed and owned by local communities to promote ownership and increase buy-in.

There should be a comparison between the five integration pilot areas and five non-pilot areas to further develop integration measures with those you are trying to support.