

### Purpose of the Report

1. The Government recently published a Green Paper regarding its Integrated Communities Strategy, the Government has invited feedback through consultation with a deadline for responses by 5 June 18. This report contains the response prepared by officers on behalf of the Council and its partners.

### Background

2. The intended outcome of the consultation will be an Integrated Communities Strategy which could be published towards the end of 2018. Further information is available through the following link and is summarised below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/integrated-communities-strategy-green-paper>

3. The Government has described a vision for building strong integrated communities – communities where people, whatever their background, live, work, learn and socialise together, based on shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities.
4. Dame Louise Casey carried out a review into opportunity and integration, the conclusions evidenced of number of communities divided along race, faith or socio-economic lines, rise in recorded hate crimes, race disparity audit.

### Proposal

5. The green paper sets out a number of key policy proposals upon which it has sought views via a number of questions, the Gateshead response to those questions is set out at appendix 2.
6. The government is proposing a trial of new ways of working to help improve community integration, the paper proposes Integration Areas (new localised co designed approach LA & partners – trial in 5 areas) Blackburn with Darwen, Bradford, Peterborough, Walsall, Waltham Forest.
7. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's (formerly the Department for Communities and Local Government) to launch a new Innovation Fund new thinking and test innovative approaches to tackling integration issues.
8. Other proposals include:
  - (i) Leadership
    - a. Public Sector – new requirement for a specific equality objective to outline specific activity to promote integration
    - b. Local Government commit to reviewing priority policies and services to determine how they can drive integration
  - (ii) Migrant support to integrate
  - (iii) CYP prepared for life
  - (iv) English language skills
    - a. New community-based English language programme

- (v) Mitigate residential segregation
  - a. Libraries and other community hubs to contribute to integrated communities
  - b. Revised guidance on how community groups can bid to take over local assets
  - c. Parks and green spaces - how they can promote integration
- (vi) Economic opportunity
  - a. Support EM into work where there is a big gap between employment rates and white British people
  - b. Increase take up of apprenticeships and EY offer by people in isolated communities
- (vii) Challenge practice anti integration
- (viii) Shared learning of what works
  - a. Develop clear set of integration measures at local and national level

9. To assist with the consultation, a set of questions, as follows has been provided to structure responses:

- (i) We define integrated communities as communities where people - whatever their background - live, work, learn and socialise together, based on shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities. Do you agree with our definition?
- (ii) 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?
- (iii) Do you have any examples of successful approaches to encourage integration that you wish to highlight, particularly approaches which have been subject to evaluation?
- (iv) The Green Paper proposes that we need to build the capacity of our leaders to promote and achieve integration outcomes. Do you agree?
- (v) 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?
- (vi) 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?
- (vii) 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?
- (viii) The Green Paper sets out proposals to support parents with their choice of out-of-school education settings. Do you agree with this approach?
- (ix) The Green Paper proposes a number of measures to improve the offer for people to learn English. Do you agree with this approach?
- (x) Do you have any other suggestions on how we can improve the offer for people to learn English?
- (xi) 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?

- (xii) 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?
- (xiii) The Green Paper proposes measures to encourage integration and resist divisive views or actions. Do you agree with this approach?
- (xiv) The Green Paper proposes measures to address practices which can impact on the rights of women. Do you agree with this approach?
- (xv) The Green Paper proposes core integration measures for national and local government to focus on. Do you agree these are the right measures?

## **Consultation**

10. In preparing this response, the Council has received information from the Public Health Team, Neighbourhood Management and Volunteering Team and Education Gateshead, comments were also received from The Gateshead Housing Company, the Safer Gateshead Partnership and the Diversity Forum.

## **Alternative Options**

11. The green papers is seeking views on proposals to help inform the development of the Integrated Communities Strategy, the response contains comments on the proposals which may influence the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government final proposals.

To not respond to the consultation could result in a strategy that is not relevant to helps tackle the issues faced by communities in Gateshead, therefore it was considered that a nil response was not an alternative option.

## **Implications of Recommended Option**

### **12. Resources:**

- a) **Financial Implications** – The Strategic Director, Corporate Resources confirms that there are no financial implications arising directly from this report.
- b) **Human Resources Implications** – There are no direct implications arising from this recommendation
- c) **Property Implications** – There are no direct property implications arising as a result of this report.

13. **Risk Management Implication** – There are no direct implications arising from this recommendation

14. **Equality and Diversity** – There are no direct implications arising from this recommendation.

15. **Crime and Disorder Implications** – There are no direct implications arising from this recommendation

16. **Health Implications** – There are no direct implications arising from this recommendation.
17. **Sustainability Implications** – There are no direct implications arising from this recommendation.
18. **Human Rights Implications** - There are no direct implications arising from this recommendation.
19. **Ward Implications** – all wards could be affected by the proposals set out in the green paper
20. **Background Information**

Annex 1– The response to the consultation questions.

Gateshead Council Response to Integrated Communities Green Paper:

**1. We define integrated communities as communities where people - whatever their background - live, work, learn and socialise together, based on shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities. Do you agree with our definition?**

*An integrated community as a place where people feel they belong, where they have good social connections and where the community works together to ensure that all people are supported and cared for. Ultimately this aims for the full participation of all people in community life – effectively community cohesion. Ethnicity and migration should be one key element of this along with socio-economic issues such as social isolation, long term conditions, worklessness, etc. Promoting the achievement of productive activity, independent living, social activity, etc. contributes to a wide range of outcomes such as wellbeing and health, educational attainment, and economic prosperity. It is important that there is equality of opportunity and there is appropriate local support for both statutory partners and the community and voluntary sector to enable this to happen. The spatial planning of neighbourhoods in the future will be essential in helping to provide the best environment, housing, employment and social needs of communities in the future. The retention and development of community buildings and assets will be essential to providing the social fabric of cohesive and integrated communities.*

**2. 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?**

*Yes agree as due to the complexities of the challenges which are not uniform across the country. The issue, in quite a lot of cases, is not necessarily down to ethnicity or faith but around socio-economic status of individuals or groups. To help build more integrated communities we need policy working towards reducing the inequalities gap between the richest and poorest and a more equal society.*

*Adopting a place based strategy alongside the development of local plans and intervention will be most effective if the approach is localised to meet the needs and issues of a particular area and link in with existing local plans on a range of other areas e.g. housing, health inequalities agenda etc. This also provides the local area with some ownership of the issues being tackled across a number of partners.*

*It will also be important to recognise, however, that where things can be done once and at scale, then this will be more efficient. A mix of national, regional and local approaches are usually required to tackle complex issues.*

*A place based approach will not only result in a shift from universal services but also enable local communities to influence and drive the development within their local neighbourhood.*

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

*There may be good examples from the Syrian Refugee resettlement programme where resettlement has been successful in encouraging integration. Not aware of any others though there must be good examples from Scandinavian countries where they appear to invest in equality, both politically and economically.*

*Gateshead EMTAS (ethnic minority and traveller achievement service) has produced information packs and a webpage for schools to access which gives useful information, contacts for new arrivals (recent migrants and asylum seekers), these can be translated into relevant languages. The content of these have been developed using feedback from the Syrian refugee families recently arrived into Gateshead.*

*The School Support and development programme offered by EducationGateshead includes inclusion training for new arrivals into schools, hate crime awareness and training focused on delivering British values. The annual school census of Gateshead schools shows 90 different languages other than English used by 1,900 pupils as their first language, in a local authority area with a relatively low level of ethnic diversity.*

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

*Yes. The leaders at a community, local, regional and national level are the key holders towards achievement of integration through the development of policy and plans at all levels. This hasn't always happened due to previous ways of working and constraints through grant mechanisms etc. which were focused on providing services to meet the needs of excluded groups exclusively and did not create links to the wider community and foster a culture of integration and learning. Sharing good practice across leaders of all sectors would be a great step forward.*

*The key to success will be a shared vision with communities which reinforces the need for a place based focus to this strategy.*

*It can be difficult to get many leaders to share a vision therefore the strategy should offer some structure for how to propose to change this or ensure the right people into positions who have correct values and understanding of what's needed, to communicate the messages more widely into teams/organisations' values and culture? The strategy may also need to propose opportunities of good practice, training and policies and practices need to be addressed to ensure this can happen*

**5. 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?**

*Yes. If we are going to support recent migrants with information there is a need to agree what British values and rights and responsibilities are and that this is understood by all. This will help support people to understand the values and the responsibilities without having to give up their heritage. We need to ensure they are welcomed into the country. This support will ensure better integration in the long term for individuals, communities and society and will provide further long term opportunities in relation to employment, study etc. With this measure there may also be a need to share information about recent migrants with the existing local community.*

*There will be a need to consider how the information is gathered and presented, there may also be a need to consider how this information is measured in practice to assess whether it's making a difference and delivering a positive impact locally. What will happen if this measure doesn't appear to work and how will be addressed.*

**6. 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?**

*People coming to the UK as migrants will increasingly be coming with a high level of needs and not necessarily those that can be dealt with in the short-term so the funding may help to buffer the impact on Local Authorities in the short-term, they will have to continue to pick up the high social care needs of some of their residents in the long-term, at a time when Government grants to Local Authorities is being cut.*

*The fund is grossly inadequate and ought to be refocussed to ensure the right level of support is available locally for the most vulnerable.*

**7. 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?**

*Yes, a more integrated community is going to be a more cohesive community. All children and young people should receive the opportunity of a good education, safe environment, economic skills, learn social skills and values, whilst having the opportunity to socialise and mix with children of different backgrounds in a range of settings not just school. This is key to ensuring successful integration, getting this right with the children and young people as a first step.*

*Gateshead schools have strong existing provision to deliver this agenda through participating in the UNICEF rights respecting programme, actively engaging with the British Council school twinning & exchange opportunities. The EMTAS service delivers to all primary school settings and a number of secondaries.*

*Gateshead has very well supported Fair Access Panels and Pupil Placement panels across all primary and secondary school settings to ensure new arrivals; migrants, asylum seekers and travellers are placed into mainstream education in the best possible planned way.*

*What training and support is available in schools and community groups around E&D and anti-bullying awareness to embed in education process? Should it be part of the curriculum from starting school ie, not just starting in senior schools by which time negative values are already engrained in some children.*

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

*Yes this is as important as education school settings. The out of school environment is a valuable opportunity for children and young people to take part in a range of activities and meet new children and this needs to be done in a safe supportive environment, irrespective of setting. Out of school settings should encourage integration of children from a range of*

*backgrounds and this is an ideal opportunity to bring young people together through areas such as youth social action.*

*Gateshead has an Elective Home Education policy and strong relationships with parents of home educated pupils.*

*The Gateshead Housing Company has concerns about how this is regulated. How is it ensured that the correct subjects are being taught/prospectus is being followed and taught to an appropriate standard. Who will oversee the content of the messages being taught if only coming from parent's perspective, which may not be values expected to be taught in schools. If not then this can increase potential of segregation among children and reduces certain life skills when not mixing with other children and learning from each other.*

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

*Yes vital so that true integration can happen, this is difficult if there are language barriers. Further opportunities are then opened up in terms of employment, using and understanding local services and becoming part of the community.*

*Our Adult Education Budget is already stretched and has been significantly reduced since cuts to local government funding took place from 2010. We support a new strategy for English Language provision but delivery of this will require additional dedicated resources.*

**10. Do you have any other suggestions on how we can improve the offer for people to learn English?**

*Tailor the English provision to people's needs and where they are in terms of confidence and motivation to learn.*

*Family learning provision and homework hubs are alternative methods to deliver English language learning that have worked in Gateshead. Extending family learning to particularly support the parents where English language ability is often behind that of the children in mainstream education. Community learning in alternative settings where ESOL learners mix with adult community learners.*

**11. 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?**

*Yes this approach is essential to ensure that barriers (of all types) in residential areas are removed and people are given the opportunity to develop and maintain relationships with people from different groups. This should be tailored to need and not have punitive element where it is not immediately practical for people to achieve. Planning functions would need to be involved in creating healthier communities and opportunities to socially interact - green spaces and parks also play an important role.*

*Yes - How will this be measured to assess the impact and check that people actually are coming together from different backgrounds? Who is responsible for this in practice? This section makes reference to using libraries and community hubs but in many areas these are closing and being run by volunteers due to budget cuts – how do we know volunteers*



*are operating them in accordance with the above? Will Gov policies continue to have regulation/legislation around diversity and involvement/engagement work to enable organisations to ensure provision is being made for this type of work? Otherwise many leaders/organisations don't see the importance/value and therefore won't include this in their organisational structures and policies – then how can it work in practice and be supported?*

**12. 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?**

*Yes. Support will be needed to do this to give people a fair chance rather than judging people on the existing level of skills and talents alone. Mentoring and educating employers of the benefits of a diverse workforce is essential. The emerging Health at Work model from DWP may be a potential way to do this. Again, there is a need to tailor efforts to need and not adopt a punitive approach with people.*

*There may potentially be too much focus on academic/university education but other focus needed around practical skills development and focus on an individual's strengths and other courses made available to people who will struggle more in employment, eg, confidence building, employability, mindfulness and mental health awareness training, to equip them with basic day-to-day skills that could help them build confidence in the employment world and increase employment opportunities.*

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

*Yes. There will be a need to ensure that people's rights such as free speech and religious practice within the law are protected. The approach needs to ensure people have the same opportunities by promoting equal rights.*

*The strategy will need to guide organisations to get the necessary support to deliver this in practice. Regulations / legislation maybe required. around community engagement to be continued and reiterated by central Gov. and rolled out to local Gov etc?*

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

*Yes. Education and opportunity will be vital. The approach needs to support women and girls and particularly empower marginalised women to increase their participation in society and challenge some cultural norms.*

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

*The measurement framework makes sense in terms of measuring integration in a consistent way to meet local and national requirements. It would be useful to capture real change on relevant indicators over time at both levels, to understand ongoing progress and barriers and opportunities etc. The framework is useful to look at the indicators across a range of levels e.g. individual and institutional level.*

*A long term approach will be required that does not focus heavily on targets/performance measurement as this makes the assumption that impacts will be immediately available. This underestimates the complexity of cultural change and risks cessation of efforts prematurely. Qualitative data should be considered as a valuable source for evaluation.*

*The strategy will need to make clear the purpose of such measures, will they be to inform policy and service delivery through intelligence or performance manage, particularly at a local level.*