

COMMITTEE: REGENERATION AND CITIZENSHIP SCRUTINY

DATE: 17TH APRIL 2008

SUBJECT: OUR SHARED FUTURE – REPORT OF THE
COMMISSION ON INTEGRATION & COHESION

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF SCRUTINY

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IMPLICATIONS:

LEGAL	✓	COMMUNITY SAFETY
EQUALITIES	✓	ENVIRONMENT
FINANCIAL		CONSULTATIONS
STAFFING		OTHER

WARDS AFFECTED: NONE

PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this report is to respond to the request of the committee for a report on this subject, to acquaint the committee with the recommendations of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion and the Government's response to those recommendations and to advise the committee on the actions that have been or are being taken by the Council that relate to the Commission's recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. **Regeneration and Citizenship Scrutiny Committee is recommended to consider the report and to call for further information if desired, to**

identify any areas where it considers further action should be taken by the Council and to advise the Executive accordingly.

BACKGROUND

3. Arising from the events of 7th July 2006 the Commission was formed at the request of the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government as a fixed-term advisory body under the Chairmanship of Darra Singh, Chief Executive of Ealing London Borough Council and former Chief Executive of Luton Borough Council.
4. The Commission was asked to consider how local areas themselves can play a role in forging cohesive and resilient communities by:
 - Examining the issues that raise tensions between different groups in different areas and that lead to segregation and conflict
 - Suggesting how local community and political leadership can push further against perceived barriers to cohesion and integration
 - Looking at how local communities themselves can be empowered to tackle extremist ideologies
 - Developing approaches that build local areas' own capacity to prevent problems and ensure they have the structures in place to recover from periods of tension
5. The Commission consisted of fourteen commissioners, including the Chair, selected on the basis of personal experience in field relating to integration and cohesion. The commissioners served in a personal capacity, not representing groups or organisations. The Commission's remit applied only to England although best practice was also drawn from other parts of Great Britain.
6. The Commission consulted widely using a variety of approaches as well as undertaking visits to see good practice and desk research including statistical analysis and creative thinkpieces.

REPORT

7. The Commission's report runs to 173 pages including appendices and can be accessed at www.integrationandcohesion.org.uk . The Commission has made 57 recommendations in its report, some of which relate directly or indirectly to local authorities.
8. The Commission proposes a **new definition of integration and cohesion** as follows:

An integrated and cohesive community is one where:

- There is a clearly defined and widely shared sense of the contribution of different individuals and different communities to a future vision for a neighbourhood, city, region or country.
 - There is a strong sense of an individual's rights and responsibilities when living in a particular place – people know what everyone expects of them, and what they can expect in turn.
 - Those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities, access to services and treatment.
 - There is a strong sense of trust in institutions locally to act fairly in arbitrating between different interests and for their role and justifications to be subject to public scrutiny.
 - There is a strong recognition of the contribution of both those who have newly arrived and those who already have deep attachments to a particular place, with a focus on what they have in common.
 - There are strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and other institutions within neighbourhoods.
9. The Commission proposes that there should be two sorts of work undertaken to move towards achieving such a community, namely:
- Mainstreaming activities that factor in the level of aspiration set out by the definition and that consider new programmes, funding and developments in this light.
 - Specific and practical projects that are badges as integration and cohesion and are delivered separately by a range of partners.
10. The Commission's report argues the case for **four key principles** which underpin a new understanding of integration and cohesion:
- Shared futures – an emphasis on what binds us together rather than on what differences divide us – prioritising a shared future over divided legacies.
 - A new model of rights and responsibilities – citizenship and the obligations for individuals and groups.
 - A new emphasis on mutual respect and civility – the ethics of hospitality – recognition that mutual respect is fundamental to integration and cohesion.

- Visible social justice – driven by and delivered through a commitment to the principles of equality – trust in the institutions that arbitrate between groups based on fairness and transparency.
11. The Commission's recommendations are grouped under these key principles plus a group described as 'practical action'.
 12. The **twelve key messages** from the Commissions statistical analysis are as follows:
 - The national picture is a positive one – perceptions of cohesion are good in most areas.
 - How cohesive an area is will depend on a series of interacting factors about that area and the people who live there so that the story of cohesion in each local area will be different. In some cases the differences will be subtle – in others they will be large.
 - Improving cohesion is about addressing multiple issues at the same time – taking action on a single issue will only make a small difference, so there needs to be both mainstreaming work and targeted policy interventions.
 - If cohesion is going to improve, local actions need to be taken to improve individuals' personal circumstances, to change individuals' perceptions and to address area wide issues.
 - Taken together this means that no simple statements can be made about integration and cohesion.
 - Deprivation remains a key influencer of cohesion, but the fact that some areas have high deprivation and high cohesion shows that local action can build resilience to its effects.
 - We don't yet know enough about how crime and anti-social behaviour are key influencers of cohesion, but there is a relationship.
 - If the discrimination experienced by some groups within our society continues, we will not be able to achieve the goals set out in the report for building integration and achievement.
 - Diversity can have a negative impact on cohesion, but only in particular local circumstances.
 - Although as a nation we can see the benefits of immigration, some people are concerned about its impacts in their local area.

- Settled communities are worried about the fair allocation of public services – with some thinking immigrants and minorities are getting special treatment.
 - Globalisation adds another layer of complexity to the picture with global events having local ramifications.
13. The Commission's recommendations that relate to Local authorities are set out in appendix A to this report.

The Government's Response

14. The response to the report sets out the Government's approach to cohesion which is that cohesion is something that can only be understood and built locally. The response also sets out how the Government will support local delivery of cohesion through **six key principles**:-
- A move away from a "one size fits all" approach.
 - Mainstreaming of cohesion into wider policy areas.
 - A national framework for local support and guidance.
 - Integration of new migrants and existing communities.
 - Building positive relationships.
 - A stronger focus on what works.
15. The document sets out in detail the Government's responses to all of the 57 recommendations in the Commission's report.
16. Communities and Local Government has issued a number of documents including:
- Guidance for Local Authorities on Translation of Publications – this follows the principles put forward by the Commission in Annexe E of their report and sets out a checklist for local authorities to use to help them decide whether and when to provide interpreters and/or written translations. The guidance also suggests that the provision of courses in English for speakers of other languages should be encouraged and may need to be enhanced.
 - Cohesion Guidance for Funders – the Department has issued this as a consultation draft and has invited responses by 26th May 2008. The draft addresses the principles set out in Annexe D of the Commission's report.

17. The draft guidance is based around five guiding principles:
- Firstly there is a clear link between equality and cohesion and we recognise the need for work with particular groups to tackle evidenced need amongst particular communities or groups experiencing inequalities.
 - Secondly all groups need to consider how they can promote cohesion and integration as well as meeting the diverse needs of the community.
 - Thirdly the evidence shows that building relationships between people promotes cohesion.
 - Fourthly, to meet our goals on integration and cohesion, funders should seek to find the appropriate balance between bridging activities, building relationships and links between people from different backgrounds, and activities which support particular groups alone.
 - Fifthly, that all of this will be driven by the local context and specific local needs at the time of funding.
18. The draft guidance then provides a checklist for funders to use to apply these principles. The draft guidance is being considered by an officer group in order to develop a response to the Department.
- Communicating important information to new local residents – the Department has responded to the Commission's suggestion of providing packs of information for new arrivals to aid their integration into the community by issuing a leaflet to local authorities. The leaflet makes it clear that the Government wants to see these packs used to:
 - Set out clearly the responsibilities that come with living in the UK as well as practical information about how to access services.
 - Give a clear sense of national values not just local amenities.
 - Communicate the unwritten rules of behaviour that are so important to enable new communities to integrate with existing ones.
19. The leaflet draws attention to and provides the address of web based guidance and a model information pack. The six key things to be considered in developing an information pack are:

- Tailor the pack to local needs.
 - Use the opportunity to get across key local messages.
 - Ensure that rights and responsibilities are balanced.
 - Give a sense of British values.
 - Communicate the unwritten rules of behaviour.
 - Translate in a targeted way that encourages learning of English (attention is drawn to the guidance on translation).
20. Work has begun on considering how the guidance can be applied to develop a pack for new arrivals to Luton.
21. Very recently (11th March) Lord Goldsmith has reported on the review of citizenship which he carried out at the request of the Prime Minister. His terms of reference included a review of the evidence gathered by, amongst others, the Commission. His report proposes a number of measures to clarify who can obtain citizenship, to encourage those who are settled here to become citizens if they can and to educate young people about the privileges and responsibilities of citizenship with a ceremony at the end of school. He also recommends that the law of treason should be reformed to make the duty of allegiance relevant to modern times and that there should be a new national day as a focus for expressing our shared belonging as citizens of the UK.

PROPOSAL/OPTION

22. The Committee is asked to consider this report, to call for further information or evidence if such is required, to consider whether and what further action is needed in the light of the Commission's recommendations and the Government's responses and to advise the Executive accordingly.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

23. There are no legal implications to this report and this has been agreed with J. Newman in Legal Services on 7 April 2008.

EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

24. Inequality and the consequent unfairness and injustice militates against both integration and cohesion. The thrust of the Commission's report is about a change of culture to one which gives greater weight to those things that unite us as citizens than to those differences that have the

potential to divide us. It is important for cohesion and integration in Luton that the Council has regard to the recommendations of the Commission that relate to local authorities in the light of the Government's responses.

APPENDIX

25. The recommendations of the Commission applicable to Local Authorities

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972, SECTION 100D**

Our Shared Future – the report of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion
Guidance for Local Authorities on Translation of Publications – DCLG

Cohesion Guidance for Funders – Consultation – DCLG

Communicating important information to new local residents – leaflet – DCLG

The Government's Response to the Commission on Integration and Cohesion –
DCLG

Citizenship: Our Common Bond – report to the Prime Minister by Lord Goldsmith
QC

Report (10) to the Regeneration and Citizenship Scrutiny Committee on 8th
January 2008.