



## ***Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper*** **Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government**

### **A Response from the Catholic Association for Racial Justice** **4 June 2018**

The Catholic Association for Racial Justice (CARJ) is an independent charity, established in 1984. We work with people of diverse backgrounds in the UK to create a more just, more equal, more cooperative society. CARJ made a submission to the earlier Casey Review, and we welcome the *Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper* and the opportunity to participate in this Consultation.

The Green Paper is useful for its commitment to integration and its concrete proposals for promoting integration both in segregated communities and more widely. It is also rich in detail on inequality (taken from the *Race Disparity Audit* and other sources). However, the issues of integration and cohesion have a **history**, which should be recognised and was not addressed in the Green Paper.

- Following the disturbances in Oldham, Burnley and Bradford (2001), the Home Secretary established a **Ministerial Group on Public Order and Community Cohesion** chaired by John Denham to consider what national government might do to help build stronger more cohesive communities. At the same time, he established a **Review**, chaired by Ted Cantele, to seek the views of local people on these issues. Both published Reports which are relevant to the concerns discussed in the Green Paper.
- In May 2003, the **ODPM Select Committee on Housing, Planning, Local Government and the Regions** decided to inquire into 'social cohesion' and **what progress** had been made since the disturbances and the two earlier Reports. The Select Committee published its Report on 5 May 2004. (HC45-1)
- In September 2006, the Communities Secretary established a **Commission on Integration & Cohesion (CIC)** chaired by Darra Singh OBE. The Commission worked for a year, visiting the regions, conducting research and holding round table sessions. They also received over 600 written responses - including a lengthy **response from the Catholic Bishops Conference of England & Wales**. In July 2007 the Commission published its Report which analysed the situation nationally and locally and set out practical proposals for integration and cohesion.

- In July 2015, the then Prime Minister and Home Secretary asked **Dame Louise Casey** to conduct a **Review** to consider what could be done to boost **opportunity and integration** in our most isolated and deprived communities. The Review was published in December 2016. It considers immigration and patterns of settlement; the extent to which people from different backgrounds mix and get on together; how different communities have fared economically and socially and some of the issues that are driving inequality and division in society; and it makes recommendations on what we should do next in a new programme to help unite Britain.

The Green Paper does not comment on these earlier Reports. Anyone seriously interested in these issues, however, might usefully read these Reports alongside the Green Paper. There is considerable overlap between them, but they also have differing perspectives and concerns. It is beyond the scope of this brief submission to compare and contrast the various Reports. However, we would like to make one or two points, which arise from this historical discussion.

The Denham and Cattle Reports, and the Select Committee Report, were explicitly prompted by the disturbances in Oldham, Burnley and Bradford, where there are significant Muslim communities. The CIC Report, the Casey Report and the Green Paper retained a serious interest in Muslim communities, but they also attempted to look more widely at the scale and pace of immigration, integration, cohesion, inequality, opportunity and other issues. Our response will inevitably move between the narrower and wider focus – but we prefer the wider focus.

The CIC Report and the Green Paper both stress the positive view that, on the whole, integration has been a success. The CIC Report noted that CLG Citizenship Surveys in 2003 and 2005 found ‘that 80% of people in England and Wales perceived that people of different backgrounds got on well in their local areas.’ The Green Paper similarly reports that ‘85% of people have a strong sense of belonging to Britain and 81% say their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together.’ The Casey Review questions this positive view and points to evidence of segregation, negative feelings, exclusion, inequality and division. The more recent *Race Disparity Audit simply* describes objectively the current situation of very complex inequalities.

Running through the Reports are a number of questions which may need further consideration. Which approaches best facilitate integration, cohesion and opportunity? Are different strategies needed with different groups and in different local areas? In addition to immigration, how do issues like poverty, housing, transportation, etc contribute to alienation, marginalisation, segregation and division? How do we best foster a sense of mutual respect and the common good?

## Green Paper proposals to support the process of integration

The Green Paper suggests a number of initiatives that might support the process of integration, including :

- Creating a new Innovation Fund and encouraging public authorities to ‘promote integration’
- Strengthening leadership
- Supporting new migrants
- Providing young people opportunities for social mixing in and out of school
- Extending and improving the opportunities for learning English
- Mitigating residential segregation and creating opportunities for people to come together and participate in civic life
- Increasing economic opportunity and providing opportunities for the unemployed to move into work
- Empowering marginalised women
- Supporting faith communities and inter-faith dialogue
- Addressing the rise in hate crime
- Learning and building on ‘what works’
- Developing a clear set of integration measures at local and national level

We **welcome these proposals**. Any of them might have a positive impact on poor, marginalised, alienated or segregated communities. We also **welcome** the Green Paper’s **emphasis** on the need for **local initiatives** designed for the local situation. However, similar proposals have been made in the past, and much depends on the ideas and attitudes guiding their design and implementation. Moreover, the deeper causes of marginalisation, alienation and segregation may be related to poverty, crime, policy on immigration or counter-terrorism, etc – which may require more substantial policy changes.

### Some issues needing further reflection

In this section, we would like to highlight a few issues, from the historical discussion and the recent Green Paper, that deserve further reflection.

- **Immigration and Counter-Terrorism law and policy.** Immigration has been a contentious issue for more than fifty years. The Casey Review and the Green Paper note the increasing scale and pace of immigration. With the Brexit Referendum, immigration became a particularly polarising issue. In recent months the plight of the Windrush generation and the Home Office policy of creating a ‘hostile environment’ have come under serious scrutiny.

Following her recent visit to the UK, The **UN Rapporteur on Racism** posted an Interim Statement which highlighted the ‘racial impact of immigration law and policy and counter-terrorism law and policy’. She noted the ‘hostile environment’ created by immigration policy and suggested that ‘a policy that ostensibly seeks to target only irregular immigrants is destroying the lives and livelihoods of racial and ethnic minority communities more broadly’.

Regarding counter-terrorism she pointed to a 'sustained and pervasive discourse vilifying Islam and Muslims in the British media, and even among political leadership', and she criticised the Prevent Programme and recommended that the Government 'suspend the Prevent duty, and implement a comprehensive audit of its impact on racial equality and on the political, social and economic exclusion of racial and ethnic minorities, especially within Muslim communities.' All this leads us to ask whether immigration and counter-terrorism policy might be seriously hindering the process of integration.

- **Racial inequality, marginalisation, alienation and segregated communities**

The recent *Race Disparity Audit* has underlined the very complex patterns of inequality that now characterise our society. There are many groups who are marginalised, alienated or segregated who need support. These groups may require immediate practical support (in language, information, housing, jobs, supportive relationships, etc) or they may require support in dealing with deeper issues (eg history, identity, racism, legal status, life chances, etc).

The Green Paper and earlier Reports describe at length the segregation of some Pakistani and Bangladeshi (Muslim) communities, however some other communities are given scant attention. For instance, **Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT)** communities often live separate lives - partly because of their nomadic lifestyle. This is compounded by the serious absence of Sites and the often overt racism directed at GRT communities. It is surprising that they receive only passing mention in the various Reports cited above, and one might ask how many of the Green Paper proposals will impact these GRT communities. What other groups have been given too little attention?

- **Integration and cohesion.** Over recent years and running through some of the above Reports is the assumption that 'multiculturalism is dead', that too much is made of 'identity' and that such approaches encourage people to remain segregated leading 'parallel lives.' Those holding such views often suggest that the best approach to supporting integration and cohesion is to provide opportunities for people from different backgrounds to be in meaningful '**contact**' with one another. In fact, the text of the Green Paper is clearly based on the "contact theory" which has been taken up, in particular, by the proponents of 'inter-culturalism' who would argue that the single most important factor in terms of integration is "contact" or "interaction". But interaction can be good or flawed.

We in CARJ agree that promoting meaningful contact may support integration and cohesion. However, we also want to stress the **importance** of using **identity** to enable integration. Although the Green paper speaks of the importance of people feeling proud of their identity, it's mentioned only in passing and is not explored further in the body of the text.

The ex-Labour Government Minister, John Battle, argued rightly that if you are going to build a healthy relationship between two people of different backgrounds, it's like building a bridge; your foundations have got to be deep and firm on both sides. In other words, if people on the different sides of the relationship are insecure, they will build a very unstable relationship that can easily result in conflict. Insecurity, in its different forms, can affect many people arriving from other countries as they enter on new lives here. When one adds the impact of Islamophobia and the frequent negative media coverage particularly directed at Muslims in this country, addressing the resulting identity- insecurity at the same time as enabling interaction is significant. This issue is not addressed in the Green Paper.

A further matter that finds mention in the introductory remarks of the Green Paper, but scant reference in the body of the text or in the recommendations, is the fact that integration is necessarily a "two-way street". Newcomers need to adapt and build relationships, but the welcoming community needs to reach out the hand of friendship and make an effort to understand, respect and support them. The hand of friendship to newcomers is offered at local level, but the wider society creates an environment, and it is clear that in recent years there has been an effort by some to create a 'hostile environment.'. This 'hostile environment', the Brexit debates about immigration and the spike in hate crime could hardly be described as a 'hand of friendship' extended to newcomers.

- **British values.** There's a worrying tendency in the Green paper to impose 'British values' without acknowledging the difficulties in defining them. The concept of 'British values' is not straightforward. As we struggle with Brexit and the deep divisions which it has exposed, we must be careful about speaking of 'British values' as if they were self-evident and universally accepted. Brexit has led to an ongoing debate about 'democracy'. Freedom of speech is often challenged. Some might wish to limit the right to practice one's religion in public. The current citizenship test is said to be so difficult that most ordinary citizens of the UK could not pass it. Are we in danger of enforcing on newcomers a formalised commitment to 'British values' which many British citizens might not accept?

Moreover, we would suggest that one does not accept the values of a society until one feels valued by that society. People become extremists very often because they feel as though they do not belong. If we are asking incoming communities to accept British values, we must create a sense of belonging. This brings us back to the importance of nurturing identity.

- **Education** CARJ is concerned with educational inequality and we are committed to supporting all young people, especially those from marginalised communities, to achieve their full potential.

In the Green Paper, again relying on the 'contact' theory, too much significance is given to projects like "linking up" between schools. While these projects might be a first and important step, they can be superficial and are not sufficient.

The Green Paper fails to mention the importance of **identity-nurturing** for enabling people of different backgrounds to have equal access to the curriculum. The long-established and very effective work of the Leicester Education Authority with their programme, "Young, Gifted and Equal", provides many very useful performance indicators, across the curriculum and the different key stages, to achieve the identity-nurturing required.

A similar approach was taken by Maurice Coles in his book "Every Muslim Child Matters". In fact, this approach dates back as far as the Swann Report in 1984. It seems that so much of the learning of that report has now been set aside.

Educationalists at the end of the last century were aware of the work of the clinical psychologist, Carl Rogers, who spoke of the importance of the self-concept for education. If one doesn't have a good self-concept then one fails to learn as one should. Immigrants to this country often face a barrage of negative press which must undermine their self-concept. If that undermining is not countered, then they will fail to have equal access to the curriculum. And, if they fail academically, they will fail to have equal access to the jobs market.

- **Faith Schools.** We are aware of the difficult debate about Faith Schools; and their long and complex history. In some northern areas, around the time of the disturbances (2001), some denominational schools (Church of England and Catholic) were identified as part of the problem because those who didn't want their children to mix with Muslims simply sent their children to Church schools. In those areas, much has been done to change that original position with the result that both Catholic and Church of England secondary schools have a much healthier mix. There are some primary "Church" schools that are still quite segregated but this is more the result of where people live and the distance they are prepared for their children to travel.

Despite their complex history, we are very supportive of Faith schools. We have a long experience with Catholic schools which we know to be on the whole serving diverse populations and offering children from poor and ethnic minority backgrounds a quality education. On the whole, Faith Schools work hard to give young people an understanding of other faiths and a respect for every human being.

We will not resolve the debate about Faith Schools here. We simply want to make it clear that we have looked at this issue from the perspective of marginalised communities and we believe that it would be a serious setback for those communities and for society as a whole if Faith Schools were to be seriously constrained in their traditional role. They should be respected, supported and challenged.

- **The positive role of Faith Communities.** The Catholic Church, like other institutions in our society, has played a significant role in promoting the integration of marginalised groups, often without being acknowledged because that is not its primary function. Faith communities generally are places where people worship, but they are also places where people from diverse national, ethnic and class backgrounds – newcomers and long established residents - meet and support one another.

The Catholic community is committed to building good relations with other churches and faith communities. There are growing divisions, however, between faith communities and the wider secular society. We feel there is a need for a stronger recognition of the positive role that churches and faith communities play

**Community Organisations**, like the various local branches of Citizens UK, provide networks in which Faith Communities, Trade Unions, Schools, and other community groups can come together and work together for the common good. We are confident that these are an important model of institutions which can support the process of integration.

## **Summary and conclusion**

We wanted to stress in this response that we welcome the Green Paper, its continuing commitment to integration and its proposals to support marginalised communities from diverse backgrounds in the process of integrating into UK society. The following are a few suggestions we have made:

- the Green Paper should be read alongside the other Reports since 2001
- further reflection and research should be undertaken on issues arising from those Reports
- the UK has a positive history of welcoming migrants and settlers, but we remain an unequal and divided society with a number of challenges to face
- we welcome the Green Paper's proposals if they are carried out with sensitivity and imagination
- We need to seriously consider how immigration and counter-terrorism policy may have affected the process of integration.
- more importance should be attached to supporting and nurturing 'identity' as a way to facilitate integration and cohesion
- requiring a formal commitment to 'British values' is a questionable suggestion
- the contribution of Churches and Faith Communities and Faith Schools should be acknowledged
- Community organisations that bring together faith communities and secular groups to work together for the common good can be a positive support for the process of integration

These issues have a history dating back to 2001. The discussions of integration and cohesion overlap significantly with discussions of equality, social mobility, education, crime, and other matters. It is not surprising, therefore, that there are some key issues that are not straightforward and may need continuing reflection and discussion. Our observations above are simply pointers to the direction in which we hope those discussions might move.

As always, CARJ remains committed to working with others to create a more just, more equal, more cooperative society.

CARJ  
9 Henry Rd  
London N4 2LH  
020 8802 8080  
[info@carj.org.uk](mailto:info@carj.org.uk)