

16 January 2017

Casey review into opportunity and integration

Purpose

For information and discussion.

Summary

In December, the long awaited review by Dame Louise Casey DBE CB into opportunity and integration was published. Neil O'Connor, Director of the review team, will be attending the Board meeting to discuss the report and how Government proposes to follow it up.

Recommendation

That the SSC Board are asked to:

1. Note the publication of the Casey review and report by the APPG on Social Integration;
2. Provide suggestions of support the LGA can provide on this agenda; and
3. Discuss and direct any further activity.

Action

Officers to take forward as directed by the Board.

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Casey review into opportunity and integration

Background

1. In December, the long awaited review by Dame Louise Casey DBE CB into opportunity and integration was published. The review was commissioned by David Cameron in July 2015, and formed the core part of the fourth pillar of the Government's Counter Extremism strategy to build more cohesive communities. The review was asked to look at how government can ensure people learn English; how employment and opportunities can be boosted, especially for women; and how state agencies can work with isolated communities to properly promote integration and opportunity.
2. Dame Louise spoke about the review at Councillors' Forum in March 2016 and the LGA annual conference in July 2016, giving a clear steer on both occasions that the main focus of the final report in regard to councils was likely to be on local leadership and the role of councillors in particular in upholding British values and not shying away from difficult conversations. However, publication of the final report was subsequently delayed following the post-referendum ministerial changes.
3. Neil O'Connor, Director of the Casey review team at the Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG), will be attending the Board meeting to discuss the report and how Government proposes to follow it up.

Issues

4. The 200-page [report](#) includes chapters focusing on the changing UK population; social and economic exclusion; inequality, and specifically women's inequality; religion; hate and extremism, and leadership, as well as a short chapter of recommendations for the future. The review was developed on the basis of information gained from meetings, visits and discussions with members of the public, community groups, academics, politicians, faith leaders and others. As part of the field work, the review team met with and visited a number of local councils.
5. The report highlights the recent increase in immigration to the UK, as well as changes in patterns of immigrations over the past decade. It considers the impact of this on communities, in terms of settlement patterns and levels of segregation across different parts of the country and in regard to school populations and residential areas.
6. Not surprisingly, the report identifies that social and economic progress is perhaps the most important indicator of successful integration, with socio-economic exclusion a sign of integration failure. It surmises that while progress has been made across the years in narrowing gaps and tackling poverty and deprivation, some groups have been left or are falling behind. Across the issues of deprivation, educational attainment, employment and English language, gaps exist for several ethnic minority groups and for poorer households in the majority White British population. The report calls for the range of socio-economic exclusion suffered by some groups to be given greater attention.
7. On equality, cited as another factor of successful integration, the report highlights the striking inequality of women in some communities, as well as for lesbian, gay and

bisexual groups. It flags concern about the safeguarding of children in some communities, particularly in relation to children being educated outside of mainstream education in illegal faith schools.

8. The report also highlights that incidents of hate crime are increasing, and that there is anecdotal evidence that these increase following ‘trigger’ events.
9. One of the key issues in the report in terms of local government – as indicated in the session at the LGA’s annual conference – is leadership. The report argues that *‘too many leaders in public and faith institutions and in communities have allowed diversity and difference to become separatism and segregation that has divided communities.’* As in the Casey report into Rotherham Council, the report notes that the fear of accusations of racism, or a well-intentioned desire to be tolerant and accommodating, has had a harmful effect and can concludes that this approach can never be acceptable.
10. The report states that *‘some politicians at a local and national level have been guilty of being too willing to turn a blind eye to practices that, at best, exacerbate inequality and hold back community integration...the processes for formal intervention in local government are not sophisticated enough to deal with these issues...more needs to be done to restore confidence in public and political leadership.’*
11. Exploring this in more depth, the report surmises that there is very little recourse to address ‘inappropriate behaviour’ by councillors, with councillor conduct largely self-regulated. It concludes that there is a void between ineffective action locally on serious misconduct, and exceptional intervention in cases of widespread and serious failure by councils. Alongside this the report also notes that the country’s political leadership does not reflect the country’s, with at a local level there being a lack of women or ethnic minority councillors, and the report citing instances where women candidates had been blocked from standing. However, despite this commentary, the report does not go onto make any specific recommendations on these points.
12. The report is critical of the fact that governments have commissioned numerous reviews of community cohesion, but have not implemented cohesion or integration plans with enough force or consistency or linked them closely enough to socio-economic inclusion.
13. The review contains 12 core recommendations, summarised below:
 - 13.1. Central government should support a new programme to help improve community cohesion, potentially including area-based plans and projects addressing the key priorities outlined in the review: promotion of the English language; emancipating marginalised groups of women; raising employment outcomes among the most marginalised groups; increasing participation of women in the labour market; improving IT literacy among parents in segregated areas; boosting out of school mixing between young people.
 - 13.2. Central and local government should develop a list of indicators of a potential breakdown in integration; local authorities should collect this information regularly.
 - 13.3. Central government should work with local government to bring together and disseminate a toolkit of approaches which have seen success.

- 13.4. The promotion of British laws history and values within the core curriculum in all schools would support integration. More weight should be attached to a British Values focus on syllabus in developing teaching skills and assessing schools performance
- 13.5. Government should consider whether additional integration support should be provided immediately post-arrival, and how clearer expectations of integration could be set, potentially in advance on application for a visa.
- 13.6. Government should review the route to full British Citizenship and look at what is required to this, and consider an Oath of Integration with British Values and Society on arrival.
- 13.7. Government should work with schools providers and local communities to encourage a range of school provision and projects to ensure that children from different communities learn alongside those from different backgrounds.
- 13.8. Alongside English language support, Government should develop classes to tackle cultural barriers born out of segregation which are identified as a barrier to work.
- 13.9. Government should support further targeted English language provision by making sufficient funding available for community-based English language classes, and through the adult skills budget for councils to prioritise English language where there is a need. It should also consider whether existing programmes are sufficiently coordinated and consistently reaching those who need them most.
- 13.10. The Government should work with local government to understand how housing and regeneration policies could improve or inhibit integration locally, and promote best practice approaches.
- 13.11. Safeguarding arrangements for children outside of mainstream education should be enhanced. All children outside mainstream education should be required to be registered with local authorities, whose duties to know where children are being educated should be increased. The standards against which home education is judged should be considered; Ofsted and the Charity Commission should be resourced to support additional central and local government action to ensure safeguarding of all children in mainstream and other educational environments.
- 13.12. Government should work with the Committee for Standards in Public life to ensure the British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect for, and tolerance, of those with different faiths and beliefs and those without faith, are enshrined in the principles of public life, including a new oath for holders of public office.
14. The report has been criticised for its clear focus on South Asian communities. Arguably this criticism partly reflects the extent to which the community cohesion agenda has shifted since the review was originally commissioned, not least the fact that much of the field work for the review was completed prior to the referendum. In the context of its role underpinning the counter-extremism strategy it is understandable that there should have

been that focus. However, the referendum campaign exposed a much broader set of divisions within and between communities across the country on generational, socio-economic and geographic lines, as much as between faiths, ethnicity and nationality. In that regard, the debate could be seen to have moved on in a way that is not perhaps reflected in the report. However, the recommendations of the review are still highly relevant across the wider community cohesion or social integration agenda.

All-Party Parliamentary Group on Social Integration – interim report into the integration of immigrants

15. Publication of the Casey Review was followed earlier this month by publication of the APPG Social Integration's [interim report](#) into the integration of immigrants. Launched in August last year, the APPG inquiry was able to take account of the impact of the referendum campaign, and focuses on two issues: 1) the impact of integration policy on levels of integration, and whether a integration strategy is required, and 2) how a new post-Brexit immigration system could be designed to support communities to manage demographic and cultural change. As part of the data gathering, the inquiry has worked closely with both Boston and Calderdale councils and residents in their areas.
16. The interim report and launch event were critical of the lack of a central strategy for the integration of immigrants, arguing that integration in the UK has been left to chance. The report identifies six principles it argues should form the basis of a future strategy, some of which overlap with similar recommendations in the Casey review:
 - 16.1. Government must develop a comprehensive and proactive strategy for immigrant integration, where integration is defined as including economic, civic and social dimensions.
 - 16.2. Local authorities must be required through a statutory duty to draw up and implement local integration plans, with councils given the funding and freedom to come up with their own localised action plans. The government should also set up an Integration Impact Fund, separate to the Controlling Migration Fund, to enable councils to fund programmes promoting English language learning and social mixing between immigrant and host communities.
 - 16.3. Government should reassess its one-size fits all approach to immigration policy and consider co-designing a regionally-led immigration system with devolved and local authorities, drawing on the Canadian model.
 - 16.4. For new immigrants, integration should begin upon arrival to the UK. The Home Office should learn from best practice in other countries and proactively build a focus on integration into the process of settling into the UK. All immigrants should be expected to have learnt English before arrival or be enrolled in compulsory ESOL classes on arrival.
 - 16.5. There is a need for more and better data on the integration of immigrants. The report supports the Casey recommendation that local resilience might be supported by developing a set of local indicators of integration and requiring regular collection of data.

- 16.6. The Government should demonstrate strong political leadership on immigration in order to build public confidence and facilitate successful integration of new arrivals at a regional and local level. This includes recognising the role of both newcomers and host communities, and avoiding conflating immigration policy and rhetoric with issues of counter-terrorism.

Local government response to the reports

17. Both the Casey review and APPG report make a number of recommendations that are relevant to local government. The Casey review also included sections of commentary relevant to councils which did not lead to specific recommendations, such as the criticism of the conduct of some councillors and the difficulty in intervening to address this. To inform our future work and any media lines on this, it would be helpful to understand the Board's thinking on the recommendations and wider reports.
18. In formulating a local government response to the reports, it is proposed that going forward the LGA adopts the approach that any new duties or work programmes on cohesion must be fully funded by Government. In many councils, roles focusing on issues of cohesion and integration have been lost over the past five years. While councils need to find ways to embed this focus throughout their work, there is no doubt that new activity will require resources to kick-start and coordinate it. Any additional funding should be allocated on a multi-year basis, and allow councils the discretion to spend as is locally appropriate – in line with the specific recommendation of the APPG report.
19. Our response should also emphasise the need for Government's work in this area to be coordinated across departments – particularly those with policy responsibility for key issues such as education, housing and employment - in line with the APPG's recommendation for a comprehensive national strategy.
20. The focus on local leadership and the strategic (rather than detailed) nature of some of the recommendations – such as a statutory duty to develop plans to promote integration – reflect one of the challenges that we are aware the Casey review in particular grappled with: what levers do councils have to tackle some of the core determinants of integration when they do have restricted control over the provision of local schools and housing, and are in the process (in some places) of increasing their powers on employment and skills to enable shape local economies? The challenge for all councils – and for the LGA in supporting them - is to identify levers that enable them to move beyond the provision of community events that bring different groups together – recognising that these are nevertheless hugely important – and tackle what are difficult and deep-seated issues.
21. Members' views on how the LGA can best support councils would be very helpful. Now that the Casey review has concluded and published, we intend to conclude work to develop updated LGA guidance on community cohesion. This can begin the process of sharing best practice work on cohesion and integration across the sector in line with the recommendations of the review, although clearly that work will need to be an ongoing process.

22. Given the Casey review's focus on local leadership, there may also be scope to develop a specific offer for councillors on this, subject to discussions with the Improvement Team and Leadership Centre.
23. The Board are asked to put forward suggestions of other support that councils would find helpful in this area.

Possible questions for Neil O'Connor

24. As stated, Neil O'Connor from the Case Review team will be attending the Board meeting to discuss the report and how Government intends to respond. Some questions the Board may wish to consider raising include:
- 24.1. Will the Government formally respond to the Casey review and / or APPG report?
- 24.2. What plans does the Government have to take forward the recommendations of the Casey review in particular?
- 24.3. When the Casey review was first announced, the previous Prime Minister outlined that it would inform plans for a major new Cohesive Communities Programme, but this has yet to be announced. Is Government still intending to develop a programme, and if so when might it be announced?
- 24.4. The Casey report commented that it was difficult to intervene where there are failings in local leadership, but made no specific recommendations on this. Is this something Government intends to explore further?
- 24.5. Will the Government commit to working with the LGA and councils in developing a programme of activity that follows up the review?

Implications for Wales

25. There are no specific implications for Wales.

Financial Implications

26. None; work set out in this paper will be carried out within existing budgets.