



**Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government**

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth
Minister for Faith

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Clive Betts MP
Chair, Housing, Communities and Local
Government Committee
House of Commons
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5 September 2018

Dear Clive,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide evidence at the Select Committee on the Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper on 16 July. There were several issues raised at the hearing that I was unable to comment on in detail, either because I am not the Minister directly responsible for that particular policy area, or I undertook to obtain further information in order to provide a fuller response. I have attempted to address each of the points on which you sought clarification below:

Home education

You had asked about home education and Government policy following the Department for Education's recent call for evidence and consultation on revised guidance documents. I raised your queries with Lord Agnew, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the School System, and understand he has already written to you directly on this issue.

Funding for English language

You had enquired about resourcing for English language provision. The Department for Education funds ESOL courses for over 19 year olds from pre-Entry Level to Level 2, as well as community-based English language provision and English literacy courses which are also accessed by some non-native speakers, through the Adult Education Budget (AEB). Colleges and training providers have the freedom and flexibility to determine how they use their AEB allocation to meet the needs of their communities.

The AEB was set at £1.5 billion in 2016/17 and providers spent £99 million of this on ESOL courses, supporting 114,100 adult learners. We do not have data on how much was spent on community-based English language provision or literacy courses accessed by non-native speakers.

Additionally, my Department continues to fund a community-based English language programme with tuition targeted at learners in some of the most isolated communities. We are investing nearly £4.85m in 2018/19 through this existing programme to support over 19,000 new learners.

As you will know, we announced in the Green Paper that we plan to launch a new community-based English language programme, and will use the learning from our current programme to assess proposals and inform decisions on future provision, including ability to reach our target learners and quality of tuition. We published a new prospectus inviting applications to be part of the new programme this week.

Further, the Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper proposed developing a new strategy for English language in England to improve outcomes and secure better value for the taxpayer by making best use of existing funding. We are considering the consultation responses to the Green Paper and will announce any potential future plans on English language in due course.

Existing streams of funding

At the hearing, Bob Blackman MP asked about funding to those organisations who currently received grants from my Department to deliver integration and community-related projects.

As you will be aware, we are investing £50 million over the next two years to support our integration priorities. We have reprioritised MHCLG's existing programme funding over the next two years to support directly the objectives of the Green Paper. This includes continued funding for programmes focused on bringing communities together, tackling hate crime and strengthening faith institutions. Where the Department has existing grant funding agreements in place with organisations, funding will be paid in line with those funding agreements where grant conditions are met.

As I outlined during the evidence session, we intend to set out more fully how we intend to spend that £50m in the Government's response to the Green Paper consultation to be published in the Autumn, but you may be aware we have committed £7m to the new Integrated Communities Innovation Fund over the next two years and a further £6m for the new community-based English language programme in 2019/20.



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