

Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee

Oral evidence: Integrated Communities Strategy, HC 942

Monday 16 July 2018

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Members present: Mr Clive Betts (Chair); Bob Blackman; Helen Hayes; Andrew Lewer; Mary Robinson; Liz Twist; Matt Western.

Questions 1 - 95

Witnesses

I: Dame Louise Casey DBE CB.

II: Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Minister for Faith, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

Examination of Witness

Witness: Dame Louise Casey.

Chair: Good afternoon. Thanks very much for coming to be with the Committee this afternoon for the one-off session we have on the *Integrated Communities Strategy* Green Paper. Before we go over to you, Louise, members of the Committee will put on record any particular interests they may have that are relevant to this inquiry. I am a vice-president of the Local Government Association.

Bob Blackman: As am I.

Liz Twist: I employ a councillor in my office.

Helen Hayes: As do I.

Q1 **Chair:** Andrew is coming back and he is a vice-president of the LGA, as well. Dame Louise, to give you your formal title to begin with, thank you very much for coming. I normally ask witnesses to introduce themselves at the beginning, but it is pretty clear who you are and why you are here today, following the review that you carried out. Let us start by addressing the review and the Government's response to it, if we could. The first question is this. Right at the outset, you said that the integrated strategy needs to set out some bold changes. Do you think it has done



that or could it have been bolder? Is it lacking somewhat?

Dame Louise Casey: What do I think? It is over a year since this Committee considered it; it feels like it is, anyway. Given the extraordinary times we are in and the need for the country to pull together, be united and those sorts of things, to put it mildly, I personally feel that the integration strategy needed to, and should now, move much more from being a consultation and a Green Paper into action and strategy, to take some of the very good ideas forward. For example, it is not a matter of “shock, horror” to anybody on this Committee that I feel we should now be motoring with things like English language being significantly more available and flooded into areas where English is a second language, and people either cannot be effectively in education or do not have access to employment opportunities.

The building blocks were there. Many of the things in the Green Paper are right; the issue is that they are not moving quickly enough, and it is not clear how quickly that is going to happen. Of course, I think it is one of the largest issues facing the UK today and, therefore, we should be prioritising it significantly more than we are.

Q2 **Chair:** What would you want to see that is not in there?

Dame Louise Casey: I am still waiting for a very big announcement on English language, for example. In fairness, one was made in 2015—to take £20 million of money out of DCLG’s main budget and spend it on targeting language to women for whom English was a second language. My understanding is that that has already been evaluated, and it has been shown to reach women in those communities and to be highly effective. I do not know why we need to wait any longer to use some of the £50 million they have allocated to get going on that, for example.

In the same way, welcome though it was that the Secretary of State, James Brokenshire, made an announcement at this Select Committee last week of a £7 million innovation fund, it is another one of those where you have to bid in and they will respond as to whether they think the bid will make headway, so it feels experimental. The way the integration strategy should work is that we should get on with some things like English language. You will find that I am like a broken record on that throughout. Secondly, we should by now have got on with the job of the five integration action zones, which were outlined in the first report. My understanding is that it is still not clear what is going to happen in those areas, and we know what needs to happen.

It could be that Ministers have a limited amount of money, or it could be that this is just a very difficult time for people to make decisions, but some of what they are doing is right. They just need to spend the money and get on with it. Do not start me on education, home schooling and out-of-school placements.

Chair: I was about to.



Dame Louise Casey: I am sorry; I am just warming up, now I think about how much I am not happy about. There we are. I am no longer a serving civil servant and it is probably showing. You are my first Select Committee since I stepped away last year. I am trying to say that there is no doubt that the building blocks are right, but they just need to get on with them, and some of them they need to motor on. We need to spend more money on some of those building blocks. That is what I think.

Q3 **Chair:** The requirement to have an oath was something you pushed for very strongly, but it seems to have been completely ignored.

Dame Louise Casey: Interestingly, there were two oaths in my shopping list of recommendations.

Chair: That is quite a small number for you.

Dame Louise Casey: This is very therapeutic. Thank you for having me in. If I lie down, stop me.

I had two aspects to that. First, it is absolutely clear that there is a moment when people arrive, whether they arrive through the visa system or through other migrancy systems, when they want to be here, they want to work and they want to be part of our society. Normally, they are leaving places that are less good, and that is why they come here. I felt, as you saw in the recommendations, that we could do more to get that moment of an oath in place, rather than waiting until they have gone through a long process.

We know from the evidence—and I believe there is cross-party support for this—that those oaths and citizenship ceremonies are welcomed by everybody. People like them. They feel part of them and feel welcomed into the country. It is all good, so we should be exploring the ground rules of how we want to be as a society as soon as people get here, frankly, if not before.

My second one Sajid Javid, who was the Secretary of State at the time, happened upon. I thought his response to my review was quite interesting. It was an oath around public office, which I feel is symbolic. We should expect the leaders of our society to adopt the Nolan principles as a minimum, but go further. MPs swear an oath when they arrive in Parliament. I think it is really important, and I wanted local authority members to be part of that same process. Oaths and being part of our society are not just for the people who have arrived; they are for the people who live here already. One of those that would have been symbolic for me is asking local authority members in particular, and others, to swear an oath that upholds good in our society.

When I did the inspection into child sexual exploitation in Rotherham, I had frankly seen enough to tell me that some people in those roles do not get what the rules of the game are, from non-payment of council tax while thinking they could sit in meetings where decisions were made



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about what I would pay, through to extraordinary standards of behaviour that fall short of what we would expect in public life. It is a matter for this Committee, because you are the Committee that oversees the work of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. When you think that 65% of the public cannot think of the political party that represents them right now, decency and trust are really important.

One of the ways to restore decency and trust—you did not expect this, as I can see from people looking at me now and thinking, “What is this woman on about?”—is something about people in public office holding standards of decency. There are moments when I feel as though standards of public office are let down, and things like an oath would be symbolic of the idea that we are all in this together and all stand up for the same standards. That would include political parties in this Parliament as well.

Q4 Chair: On home schooling, the Government have indicated some progress. Does that generally meet the requirements of your review?

Dame Louise Casey: No, it is still in this territory of guidance and consultation. I must impress this upon colleagues. For example, there is a study—it is three years old—from which we know that people who have been arrested for terrorism offences or who are known extremists in London take their children out of school, because they clearly do not want them to be in school. Even at its worst, that does not seem to put the frighteners on people. It is absolutely extraordinary to me that we allow that to happen. In the same way, as somebody who really cares about issues of child abuse, domestic violence and all of those things, I know, at the other end of various horrible issues, that families take their children out of school for all sorts of reasons.

I do not quite understand. It is this question again: why do you need to consult? Surely, when we bring up children in this country, it is the responsibility of all of us to make sure they are brought up safe and well. I do not have children, but I care about other people’s children. That is why I was very clear in the review when it came to the recommendations. I was under some pressure from various parts of the Civil Service and others to not be quite as robust around what I felt about home schooling. I do not understand why it is such a big issue to know where children are, that they are being brought up in safe circumstances and that we should check whether that is happening. I do not quite know how much worse it could get.

Q5 Mary Robinson: Home schooling is something that people are quite energised about at the moment. Some constituents of mine have filled in a petition and are very engaged in it. One of my constituents came into my surgery with her children, who were delightful and have obviously been extremely well educated, based on what I could see from a glance at them. Specifically, on a wider view of home schooling, is it about home schooling itself or is it about the checks that need to take place? To what extent do we ensure that parents have that right to raise their children



and educate them as they see fit?

Dame Louise Casey: Thank you, because it is absolutely right that I do not have a political view on whether people should or should not home school. I understand why people want to retain the right to home school, and I am sure there is a very strong lobby of people who fundamentally believe in home schooling and their right to home school, who do it very well and can do it better. Those children are their children and it is their responsibility. I do not have a problem with that. What I have a problem with is not the people who are bringing their children to your surgery to say, "Look, I am good at this," but the people who do not want you to know where their children are or the people who have never registered that their children are arriving at school anyway. It is the checks and mechanisms that I feel we are not robust about. I also think we should double-check. Even if there was the odd check on a family to see whether their home schooling was as good as their local school, it would be great.

It is not some sort of political thing: "Stop home schooling; it is terrible." I am not in that position at all, but I am very concerned about our checks and balances and the fact that we cannot inspect. No matter who appears before you to tell you that local authorities have this responsibility and should just get on with it, I can assure you that, while local authorities have some responsibility in this area, it is not clear enough. They do not feel well enough backed by the Department for Education in this area. There is not that sense that we all agree we should know where children are, what type of environment they are in, whether it is safe and if it is good enough. That is the barometer that we should adopt in these circumstances.

Of course, we should not shy away from the fact that, at the most challenging end of non-integration, people are making specific choices about withdrawing their children from schools or not sending their children to schools in the first place, because they do not like some of the things that this House has voted on around equality, whether for religious minorities, for women or for people who wish to get married and are gay. They are laws and they have to be taught. Whether you agree or disagree with them is of a second order.

You cannot shy away from the fact that some of that is happening in these communities. If that means the home schooling movement, which is quite powerful, needs in some way to come with us on this journey and be open to being checked or balanced, it should welcome that. Otherwise, it gets brought into disrepute. The people in your constituency, I assume, are not trying to do anything anti-whatever. They might or they might not. I do not know, but I doubt it; otherwise they would not rock up at your constituency.

Q6 Matt Western: Dame Louise, I was not here a year ago or when you were last in front of the Select Committee, but you are clearly very frustrated about how long it has taken to get from the publishing of the review to the Green Paper. It seems to be further delayed through



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consultation and the piloting of integration areas. In your view, why is it taking so long? Is it just capacity or priority?

Dame Louise Casey: It is hard to get quite a lot of things done at the moment, in terms of gaining air time to get action. I would imagine that this will be one of those areas, within the Department and the Government overall. It took a while for me to publish my review in December 2016. I suppose I think that this is the solution to some of the things that are not great in the country right now. If people saw it from that perspective, they would see the fundamental importance of things like language for everybody. Whether people agree or disagree with immigration, whether they agree or disagree with Brexit, we have a nation of people who live in this island. A starting point would be us all speaking the same bloody language.

It is not controversial, seriously. Some of it I find frustrating, because I think they would be healing processes, bringing people together, not just relying on an England football win to bring us all together. There should be something more substantive about bringing us together and giving people an opportunity. In the same way, I feel very passionately about social and economic exclusion. If you are from Pakistani or Bangladeshi heritage and a woman, for example, you are disproportionately more likely not to work and not to speak English than your male counterpart. I think we can do things about that. We do not need to pilot something to work out what we might do about it. For some of it, I feel frustrated that they have not just got on with it quickly enough.

This is the Department that, for a lot of last year and some of this year, has had to prioritise housing and Grenfell. The Department rightly had to step into that space and deal—like many people did, but on behalf of Government—with what happened there. Understandably, that absorbed a huge amount of resources and energy, but now we are here and the Green Paper has closed. James Brokenshire knows what he is doing. Sajid knew what he was doing. They can crack on.

Q7 Matt Western: In summary, is it your view that society is becoming more fragmented and divided? Is that why you were pushing for this in your paper? If so, what timetable are you setting for urgency? You are clearly pushing for this to get on and happen.

Dame Louise Casey: I am, because we need a domestic post-Brexit plan, frankly, and we need to be doing that now, not waiting until next year. This would be part of that. I would probably cover homelessness and a few other things in that grouping. In the review that I published, the evidence is very clear about the growth of areas that are becoming mono-cultural, mono-ethnic or mono-religious. The tide of change in the country is that at the same time as we are more diverse as a nation, which is great, we are also more isolated or segregated in certain areas of the country. You have the growth of areas that are becoming more and more closed, in my view, to speaking English, working in the labour market and being able to access opportunities.



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This is symbolised, for me, in one of the schools where they asked all the children between the age of 11 and 16 what the percentage of the Asian population was in the United Kingdom. Over 50% of kids in that school thought that the population was no less than 50% Asian. We have children growing up in these areas and we can track them, evidence-wise, census by census. This is not me; this is proper information. In the same way, for example, we know that population growth has been exponential. We have grown the size of Bradford two years in a row. The evidence of the population size and where it is located speaks for itself.

Of course you have a sense of people feeling more divided and you need to counter that. I feel we have had an immigration policy that says "see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil". We have almost ignored it because it has been so political. You have to be either for it or against it. Well, it has kind of happened, and now we need to manage it and take some of the politics out of it. This is part of it. My frustration is that it is not going to get any better and, therefore, as a Government, people should be responsible and do something about that. We have a rise in hate crime. We have a rise in people who are anti-Muslim. These are not good things for our society. They are bad things and we should do something about that.

Q8 Mary Robinson: Dame Louise, I would like to ask about the funding of the integration strategy. The Government have promised £50 million over two years to implement the strategy as it is now. Do you think that is sufficient?

Dame Louise Casey: To be fair, when that sum was announced, I thought, "That is more than I thought they were going to say", if I am honest. I tried to get to the bottom of what is new and unallocated money, but I found it hard. For example, was the £20 million announced in 2015 for English language part of that £50 million or not? In fairness, I would really like to know what is allocated to what, what is new money and what is not. I am sorry; you are talking to somebody who worked as a civil servant in various tsar roles for 20 years. You make announcements, and you can see sometimes it is completely new, and at other times there is some re-fangled money.

In a way, it is better right now to say, "We do not have much money to spend on this, so we are going to spend it this way and get the most we want out of it." That is probably a better answer to Mr Western's question than the one I gave him, which is that it is legitimate for the Department to pilot some things and test some approaches when they are not sure if they want to spend a lot of taxpayers' money. You should test in those circumstances. In other areas like English language, you do not need to test; you can crack on.

Do I think it is a match for the type of ambition that they have in their Green Paper, which the Prime Minister wants, Sajid wanted when he was Secretary of State and I know James Brokenshire will want? No, it does



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not match the ambition. Is it better than I thought it was going to be? Yes. Do I understand where all of that money is? No, it feels quite opaque. I would like the Department to be much clearer about how it is spending the money. Most of us understand these are tough times when it comes to money. It is better to be upfront and say, "We do not have a lot, but we are going to spend it the best way we possibly can on this," than to tell me you are spending money when you are not really; you have already spent it.

Q9 Mary Robinson: Specifically on that point, what are you doing to try to navigate your way around this conundrum of the money and where it is allocated?

Dame Louise Casey: As a freelancer—I believe that is the expression—I did what your researchers probably do. I spent quite a lot of time having a look through their press notices last week, so I am doing that. You are in a very powerful position to ask the person who is following me to give a little more detail.

Q10 Mary Robinson: I am sure that that has been heard and will be asked. Looking at the integration strategy, and the funding that will go into it—the £50 million—you seem to be saying that funding is required above and beyond that which is currently available. What specific areas would you like to see it spent on? Where should this extra money be spent?

Dame Louise Casey: I would like money spent on English language classes. I would like a targeted employment drive for women who are socially and economically inactive in some of these communities. We would do well to look at how you mix children in schools where you have very high levels of segregation. We know that knowing somebody who is different from you changes your attitudes towards that person as you grow up. Just an encounter changes a child's attitude.

I would like something like the National Citizen Service, which would not involve new money. My own view is that that money should be targeted very specifically into areas of high deprivation. For a while, that would be a priority for the National Citizen Service. The evidence behind its work is very powerful. Kids lock into it and do the courses, and we know how successful they are. We have the evidence for that. Not all of this is about the £50 million or new money; some of it would also be about looking at the money that is already being spent and seeing how you could better target it.

Colleagues in the Department should think about things like the Near Neighbours fund. It is a good scheme that has faith-based money going into various communities. I have not looked into it for two years now but, as we are mid-spending review, it would be interesting to see. You have a willing partner there. These are not people who do not want to engage with this agenda. They want to engage with this agenda. Is there anything you can do to use the money that you have more wisely? Some



of it is about very clear signalling from Government that they are serious, and that does not necessarily involve money.

Q11 Helen Hayes: What, in your view, would be the consequence of an ongoing failure to provide sufficient resources and give the strategy a sufficient level of priority, in particular for English language provision?

Dame Louise Casey: It is interesting that, at the moment, a lot of discourse around this agenda is on things like Prevent and counter-extremism, Sara Khan's appointment to the Commission for Countering Extremism and the aftermath of various terrorist events. A lot of these issues are cited within that arena. My clear view is that we should have all those discussions about British values, about what our expectations are when people arrive, about getting people into work, about people speaking a common language, about having respect and about understanding what public office is. They should all be here, in a massive mountain that says, "This is the way the country operates and these are the laws." That is not because of some really nasty people who are extremists, but because of a lot of really good people who want to get on with each other and understand each other. We accept difference, but we do not accept difference when it is harmful.

Some of the levellers in society would be far better off run, publicised and communicated from a communities department rather than being always in the echo chamber of something that is about extreme harm. It is my view that we should have managed and can manage, going forward, the influxes around immigration more effectively than we are, by taking some of the politics out of it, because people are coming and they are living here.

When I was in the Chairman's constituency two or three years ago, within the Romanian community we had a Roma community. The attendance rate in a beautiful new-build school in Sheffield was 20%. Whether under Labour and Tony Blair with anti-social behaviour or under David Cameron with the Troubled Families programme, we pushed people to get their kids into school for at least 90% of the time. We fine people who take their kids off the school register for two weeks to go skiing and let them appeal in the High Court. We are pretty good at saying attendance in school is important, for a very good reason, and yet we have a school in Sheffield that had, at that point, 20% attendance from that community. The headteacher feels she is fighting that alone. She does not feel backed up by us to say, "No, you are absolutely right". We let her fight that alone. It feels very lonely for a lot of these headteachers, who are on the front line of managing these tensions with communities.

Of course, the answer is money, but the answer is not just money. It is about where this work sits. It should sit in the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, because it is about everything in the fabric of our society, not just when it goes horribly wrong. We should never have cut the level of English language classes as we did. It was a mistake. We should have reformed them, but we should not have



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withdrawn them. We got into this political thing again, which is that we do not want to do translations because they are encouraging people not to speak English. It all gets into that space.

Most politicians I have worked for, across the political divide, when they hear the evidence and see it for themselves, more or less come to the same conclusion: it would be pretty bloody good if everybody spoke English and it would be great if we did not have to spend a small fortune on translation, but there is a route map to get where you need to be. The Department needs to grip those sorts of things, and it has not.

- Q12 **Bob Blackman:** My constituency has 161 languages spoken just in the schools, so I empathise with that particular challenge. Could I ask you one question before I go into my main question, about schooling and your view on the private religious schools in operation? Did you look at that as a particular challenge? I am not referring to a particular religion, but there are a number of religions that operate such schools and they have an impact on integration.

Dame Louise Casey: Do you mean out-of-school or both?

- Q13 **Bob Blackman:** They are what we would call mainstream schools operated by religious communities for children within those religious communities.

Dame Louise Casey: Yes, we did. I had started to come at this from the perspective of equalities, so I was trying to work out what the responsibility would be, for example, of a religiously conservative organisation that did not necessarily believe in what the House of Commons had decided is the law of the country. Let us take gay marriage, for example, or the rights of gay people. I worked very closely with Ofsted, both the previous chief inspector and more latterly the current one, and a very strong team in Ofsted with Matthew Coffey and Victor—I have forgotten his surname—who are two fantastic officers in Ofsted.

My pragmatic approach to this is that we know, and Ofsted knows, that there are certain areas and certain schools that take too long and are not upholding the values of the rest of the education system. They are a minority, and there should be faster and quicker powers to do something about those schools. I would like to see local authorities fulfilling their education role and having an overriding responsibility. At the moment, when a school opens and they are concerned about another type of school opening in their area, they are powerless to do much about it. DfE will just carry on with it, and that happened during the review.

I am slightly worried about the out-of-school placements and my reading of a slight watering-down from DfE, because I understand out-of-school environments are quite difficult and it is not giving Ofsted the ability to inspect those quite as quickly. They are consulting again. The thing is that most religious schools just crack on with it. Most people want their



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kids to go to those religious schools because their attainment levels are greater. This is about a minority and, between Ofsted, the Department for Education and local authorities, they should be able to foresee where that is happening and to do more about it than they are.

Q14 Bob Blackman: That moves me neatly on to the role of local authorities in carrying out this work. How important do you regard local authorities as being in delivering such a strategy?

Dame Louise Casey: Without doubt, local government should be the main player and organiser with responsibility for all of this. There is no other institution across our society that could carry that responsibility in the same way. It is often misunderstood in Whitehall. You know this: it continues to be that they do not see that a local authority essentially has to do everything. It has an overview across everything and, if it is good, it is bloody brilliant; if it is not good, it is terrible. That is the issue: you get extremes of effectiveness.

There is no doubt in my mind at all that integration should be a mainstream activity. It should not be an add-on to have various religious ceremonies celebrated every year. I interviewed somebody who said, "No, Louise, it's great. We do Ramadan; we do Eid; we do Christmas. We do it all here. It's all good". You think, "I am worried that this cohort of your population has probably never met anybody who is not from their cohort of the population," who could be originally white British or who could be of Pakistani heritage. If you are in Fitton Hill in Oldham versus Oldham central, you can see where mixing is required. They also have responsibility for things like housing and I believe they should have more responsibility around things like home schooling versus what is happening in schools. They are our strategic arm. Central Government do central Government and local government does local government. Local strategy is incredibly important.

Q15 Bob Blackman: Should the faith communities be doing more to encourage people from different faiths to come in and find out what their faith is all about, rather than leaving it to a local authority that, as you say, does the various different ceremonies and has the celebrations for the different religious organisations?

Dame Louise Casey: To some degree, they should. Probably what happens is that the people you are not worried about do a lot of the interfaith activity, and the ones you worry about do not. That does not mean to say you should not do some of that. It is a bit like preaching to the converted. That is the wrong expression to use and obviously the wrong metaphor, Louise. You talk to the people you think will listen to you, and people are very comfortable in some of those environments. I feel that integration should not be left to the interfaith community, because it is as much about the rights of an atheist individual who wants their kids to go to a decent school. It is everybody's issue; it is not a religious one. Religious tolerance and freedoms are one part of equalities in this country. Women's equality is also fundamental. Quite a lot of



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those religious communities, in my view, leave a little to be desired when it comes to women's equality, and I include some of the mainstream religions in that as well. I do not think we should leave it to religion, which is why local government is important.

Q16 Bob Blackman: I would not suggest that we should leave it to religion; I am just looking at the integration between the two. The other issue I want to touch on is the various different streams of government money. For example, the Prevent strategy is aimed at preventing terrorism, which comes from the Home Office and is delivered via local authorities. What role do you see for streams of that funding as part of an integration strategy?

Dame Louise Casey: How can I put this? When I was doing some of my fieldwork, I felt that there was some confusion. I am sounding like a civil servant: it was a bloody mess between who was funded for what. I found myself in a community with two fantastic young women who were setting up a coffee and health type facility in a disused place. You would just think, "Thank God these sorts of women exist." They were doing it for practically nothing. They were doing it because they believed in it and wanted to reach out to their communities. Then I discovered that they were funded by Prevent, which did not come via the local authority; it came via some circuitous route out of the Home Office. That was their source of money.

Their main job was in reaching women who were—honestly, Bob—seriously difficult. Men were escorting them there and waiting outside so they could be escorted home again. This is the tough end of Britain, in my view. The scales dropped from my eyes when I started doing this work. I did not realise I would necessarily find that quite so easily and so obviously, but I did. There was a load of leaflets in the corner. I said, "Why are they all in boxes?" It was half-term the following week and they were kicking off. They said, "It's really tricky, Louise. Because we are getting it via Prevent, we have to do something on jihadi brides". I went, "Oh, dear God. Do not hand those leaflets out. Let me speak to Charlie Farr."

The reason I am telling you that story, and it is an anecdote, is that it symbolises some of the confusion. That work should be done because it is about getting everybody on a level playing field and making sure those women are not being abused. Even if they want to live those lives, I would challenge them as to whether they should be. I am really clear: if a white woman in Surrey is being beaten up every day, and she tells me it is what she wants and she believes it is right, we do not tolerate that. We would work endlessly to try to help that woman away from that situation.

I thought it encapsulated how some of this just needs shaking down. Some of the stuff that is done on Prevent should be done because it is community engagement and integration, and some of the stuff that is done by Prevent should be done more, if you see what I mean. There needs to be a shaking-down. That is partly what gets Prevent into this



place where people can wrongly, in my view, seek to undermine it and to get people not to co-operate with it. It is an example of where we are not necessarily spending the money in the way we want to. People were using Prevent money because there was no other show in town.

It comes back to my frustration. MHCLG—I was about to call it DETR, which shows how long I have been around; I will start calling it DoE any minute now—needs to grip those sorts of groups and that sort of work because it is the right thing to do. It is not that the Prevent people were trying to do a bad thing; quite the opposite. They understand that they need to prevent, prevent, prevent, but it is a little bit of a mess and it needs sorting out.

Q17 Bob Blackman: Prevent is one issue, but there is a whole set of other streams of funding that have similar circumstances. Do you think those should be brought together as one particular package and administered by local authorities?

Dame Louise Casey: MHCLG's creation of a communities team under one directorate, pulling all that money together into one place, including the Controlling Migration Fund—that is my understanding of what has happened—is a very sensible move. Hardip Begol is excellent, and Jo Farrar, who is ex-local government, is the director-general, so all of that feels right to me. There is something around the Prevent money and its funding that needs to be looked at, but it is not a huge amount of money. Yes, of course everything should be done through local government because, whatever money the Department has, local government is in charge of everything else so it has to be a partnership. It is a bit like the Troubled Families programme. When Steve Hilton wanted to run it through a private sector organisation, I said, "Well, on you go, mate. It's not for me. Find somebody else to run it." These are their children. Local authorities house these children. They get them to school and teach them. That is where they are. Let us work with the people who have those families. This is the same thing.

Q18 Mary Robinson: Very quickly, you mentioned earlier the conflict between Prevent and managing the local authority side of things within MHCLG. Thinking back to your anecdote, is this really about cultural norms that need to be addressed? For the person who expects to be taken to a local community centre and back by a male from the family, is addressing the cultural norms in some way more important than how we run the Prevent strategy?

Dame Louise Casey: I do not follow, sorry. I genuinely do not follow.

Mary Robinson: You describe people going along to the local community centre, having to be taken there by the males in their family and expecting to be picked up and taken back. That would be culturally quite acceptable in some areas. Is it just about tackling those cultural norms and breaking them down, rather than using Prevent as a way to tackle terrorism?



Dame Louise Casey: They are two separate things. We need to be very clear which one we are doing when we are doing it. Because the only game in town to get money for those groups, for quite a long time, was by the Prevent strategy, it was conflated. I would be very concerned about the cultural norm that told me, for example, that 13-year-old girls are sexually active in their home countries, so why should they not be here; what is your problem with that? I have faced down that conversation alongside the Chairman of this Committee. We sat next to each other during that conversation with that so-called community, because it is not a community we should recognise as being acceptable here. If children are tommed at the age of 13, that is not culturally acceptable to us—end of.

We need to be very robust about the fact that some women in our society, in this country, are 62% or 64% economically inactive, as opposed to around 20% of their white counterparts and something like 19% of other minority ethnic groups. It is a standout figure. If you lay over that the fact that we know they are twice as likely not to speak English as their male counterparts, taking away everything up here to do with extremism, Prevent and all of those things, we should be worried about those women. We should be doing something to make sure that they can be active and that their children are brought up. We should not conflate that with a counterterrorism effort. We should be doing it anyway.

MHCLG is often seen as the poor relation within Government. If you look across Government Departments, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is not necessarily seen as being as important as, for example, the Home Office or the Department of Health, yet I sit before you knowing about the patterns that we have in our country, the growth of difference, the growth of separation and the fact that we are divided 50/50 by Brexit. I look at what is going to happen afterwards, and I think what is happening in communities is paramount. Doing something about that as a Government is fundamentally important. A domestic agenda that is robust is of its moment. It is really of its moment. What the Prime Minister said as she went back into Downing Street remains for me the stall that we should be operating on around social justice and exclusion, and we are not there yet.

The numbers of people sleeping out on our streets is a national disgrace. For the last street count up to 2010, so for a whole decade, we basically managed to make sure that people did not die out on our streets. Look at it. MHCLG should be one of the pre-eminent Departments across Government, and the stakes are very high in a post and pre-Brexit environment. I see Brexit as an opportunity, because it should be a hook by which all of us think, regardless of all the arguments and everything else that goes on in here, that we really want the country to be safe, to do well and for people to rub along with each other. They are British values encapsulated in one, hence our pride in the football team and all the rest of it. That is my *cri de coeur* to this Committee; we need to be



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more muscular, which I believe is the expression they use at the Innovation Unit or somewhere nowadays.

- Q19 **Liz Twist:** Can I bring you back to the pilots? You talked about them a little already. Do you think that piloting the integration strategy is the right approach in these areas? You have already said there are things we could just get on and do. Do you see any risks associated with that pilot?

Dame Louise Casey: You pilot things where you want innovation and you know what your policy outcome needs to be, but you are not sure what your route map is. Then you pilot. If you are looking for something very different and you know you want to get to the end, but you are not entirely sure how to get there, you pilot. There might be room to do some pilots in some of these integration areas, learn from them and make sure, before we spend any more money, we get that right.

For example, I would worry that the default position on spending for many colleagues, both in local government and elsewhere, is to do the easy stuff. You put more money into interfaith, cultural activities and all those things. That is fine, but not at the cost of work, employment options, mixing people, using NCS and English language. Piloting always has its place in Government and public policy, but it should not be used as a reason not to get on with things that you know you could get on with. I would prefer, when they go forward from the Green Paper, that they just get on with some things and that they know why they are piloting certain things. Pilots might help with some of the cultural shift. Some of the cultural shifts we need around people being able to talk about very difficult things in this space might need pilots, as part of how we learn to do that.

- Q20 **Liz Twist:** Do you think the pilots as currently proposed will be effective and produce that innovation?

Dame Louise Casey: I do not know. Last week on Monday they announced an innovation fund for £7 million, which I think is the first public announcement in this arena. That is a bid-in fund for local authorities to do innovation. I checked the terms and it is not the same as the five integration areas, where they have not said how much money they are spending yet. They are working with those areas on their plans. That will be the test: it will be very interesting to see what they agree to do with those areas, how much money they spend on them and what we expect to see at the end.

- Q21 **Liz Twist:** As you have made clear, we do not have to pilot everything if we know something works.

Dame Louise Casey: Exactly. It would just be really good to get on with some things, and my top priority would be English language.

- Q22 **Liz Twist:** Ultimately, are you confident that the integration strategy meets the challenges that were outlined in your review and will lead to the change you envisaged?



Dame Louise Casey: This is not the right way of putting it, but it almost needs the gloves off. What are we going to do to put this country on to the right footing? It needs one of those moments when the Government are incredibly robust, everybody stands in the same direction and says, "Yes, this is it." We are not going to keep arguing over the nuances of various words between British values and human rights. We just settle on some things and press on, around the world of integration, citizenship and acceptability, with upholding the law and not making exceptions because someone says their culture—whatever that is—trumps British law.

Honestly, I cannot tell you how often I used to look across and go, "Hang on a second. It does not matter to me which religion or culture you are from. You cannot go against British law. This is it. This is how it works. If you want to change it, go and lobby your Member of Parliament or get yourself elected, but that is the law." We could be much more robust on some of those things. The integration Green Paper does not sing that to me. It does not sing robustness to me. It has the right building blocks, but it feels timid in some places. The civil servants need real backing and ministerial support to push on. It should be a significant priority, as we need a domestic agenda in this country that talks about what is happening for Britain and the people who live here.

Q23 **Liz Twist:** Do you think that timidity could undermine the intentions?

Dame Louise Casey: It always can. You are talking to a woman who did 20 years of tsar-ing. If you really want to get something difficult done, own the fact that it is difficult, talk about the difficulties and get on with it. You have to get on with things. You can see from the way in which some of these policies are implemented that they trip themselves up.

I will give you another one. I was in Bradford at the most fantastic literary festival. Bradford Literature Festival has nothing to do with religion. It is run by two fantastic women and it is a proper literary festival. It is not a religious literary festival or a Muslim literary festival; it is a literary festival. It is very successful. At the literary festival launch, alcohol was poured. People could drink whatever they wanted. Some people were drinking alcohol; some people were not drinking alcohol. Everybody was having a great time. It was Britain at its best, all great.

Back down in London at a significant interfaith event in a marquee not that far from here, very well-meaning people were serving elderflower cordial, mineral water and culturally sensitive meat. I thought to myself, in a nutshell, that that showed that they were not symbolic of Britain. They were symbolic of people worried about Britain, whereas the women up in Bradford owned Britain. We need more of that in the liberal intelligentsia. It is really all right to offer a glass of wine and a glass of mineral water at an event, and let the person choose. Do not be overly sensitive. Those sorts of things do not take money; they take attitude and integration needs attitude.



Q24 **Chair:** You mentioned the innovation fund. Does it have the right feel to it? I was looking the other day at some information in regard to my own constituency. The first thing that struck me is that it is good to look for new things, but sometimes that is at the expense of ignoring struggling organisations that are doing a good job already, but do not have the resources to carry on and do an even better job.

Dame Louise Casey: That is always a danger with words like transformation, innovation and collaboration. There are lots of them. There is always a danger, when you see those words, that all around the country people are now thinking, "How can I rebrand what I am so that it is collaborative, innovative, transformative or whatever 'tive' is going on?" Actually, they just need some money to keep going to get the doors open, so they can get help for women fleeing domestic violence. I am sorry; I am trying not to be overly cynical about these things. They have their place, but in isolation they are not enough. There is always room for innovation and for doing things differently, but there is also room for getting on and doing what you know works.

I am really pleased they have made an announcement and put some money on the table so that people can bid for it. That is great and could not come soon enough. It is a real signal from the Secretary of State that he wants to get on and do some things, which is good. Now, can we do this as well or that as well? Can we roll this forward to put the strategy out there?

Chairman, can I abuse my position and mention one thing? It is the rise of the far right. One thing that worries me is that there is a connection in a lot of these areas between the far right milking non-integration and being anti-Muslim, pushing people away. There is this dynamic all the time and they feed off each other, but integration would cut into the middle of that. You hear racists saying, "Well, they can't even speak English. They should not live here." We are not able to ensure everybody has the ability to speak English. Do you see what I mean? You have to do this stuff for very important reasons. I know that Sara Khan and others are concerned about Islamic and far-right extremism. I think you can deal with an awful lot of those ills if you deal with integration well. English being a common language would be a very good starting point. I worry about the extreme far right and its growth. For me, that is as much a driver for doing integration effectively as anything else I have said today.

Chair: On that point, we will bring this part of our session to a conclusion. Thank you very much indeed for coming and being as forthright as ever with the Committee, with your views about what is being worked on from your report and what needs to be improved and further developed.

Witness: Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth.

Q25 **Chair:** Good afternoon, Minister. Thank you very much for coming to the Committee this afternoon, to be with us and answer some questions about the *Integrated Communities Strategy* Green Paper. The first question is this. Why has it taken the Government so long to get to the point of responding to the Casey review? The then Secretary of State said the response would be published in the spring of 2017. It is a bit delayed, is it not?

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: It was 15 months from the report to the response. As you say, it was a considerable period of time. As Louise Casey herself said correctly, this is a very complex area involving lots of different Government Departments. It perhaps took a bit longer than expected, but our view has been that it is important to get it right rather than rush it. If we got it wrong through rushing it, people would have been critical, and rightly so.

Q26 **Chair:** As a Committee, we are quite used to Government's responses being a little later than they might have initially intended, but from spring 2017, which would have been at most six months after the Casey report, to 18 months is quite a time lag, is it not?

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: We took about 15 months, from memory, but it is. I hold my hands up to that. It was on the long side.

Q27 **Chair:** When do you expect the Government's response to the Green Paper to be?

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: There has been a considerable response—over 3,500 responses—and, as you know, the consultation ended on 5 June, so we would expect to go through those and do that in some detail. We are expecting to give a full, considered response in the autumn.

Q28 **Chair:** In other words, before Christmas.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: Certainly before Christmas, yes.

Q29 **Chair:** "Certainly"—that is something we will be closely looking at. The other key issue is not merely the timing of the Green Paper, but what is in it. Dame Louise said that she wanted a bold strategy from the Government. Can you tell us which bit of the strategy that has been outlined in the Green Paper is bold?

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: I think it is a bold strategy. It cuts across different Government Departments. It is seeking to achieve something that is all-important, with a commitment to English language provision and to ensuring that we have proper social and racial mixing in our cities. All of this is a bold initiative. It is pretty eye-catching stuff. It is important stuff. I am not sure that boldness is the predominant feature that we are going for. We are going for something that we want to be



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sustainable, to ensure that over generations we have proper racial and religious mixing in our citizen communities throughout England. That is a bold vision.

Q30 **Chair:** It is a “bold vision”. Are there any bold proposals?

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: There were some bold proposals that we did not agree with. There were some bold proposals that we have carried forward into the Green Paper. We have not yet had the response, because we need to take account of the communications we have received, those 3,500-plus communications. To ensure that there is proper provision for English language for those who need it is bold. That is something that we are very much looking to achieve, for example.

Q31 **Chair:** We will probably come on to that in a minute. You said there were some bold proposals you did not agree with.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: After consideration, for example, the two oaths, which I accept were bold suggestions, we thought were not the appropriate way forward. We considered them in the round and decided that this was probably not the British way of achieving things. We do not ask people who are born in this country and are not migrants to take an oath. We felt, in the event, that it probably was not the right way forward. I can see it was a bold and imaginative proposal, but we did not think it was the right one.

Q32 **Chair:** Even though someone who becomes a citizen does take an oath at their ceremony.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: Yes. It is perhaps a 60/40 thing. I must admit that, when those proposals for the citizenship ceremonies came forward, I did not think they were the right thing, but having attended a few I can see that that rite of passage was important for people who were going through that process. It will remain the case that that still holds, and that is on reflection a good thing, but it perhaps does not mean the same thing to migrants coming to this country until they have been here some time and can go through a citizenship ceremony.

In similar way, on the oaths for public office, we have oaths in the Lords and you have oaths in the Commons. We have oaths in the Welsh Assembly, Scottish Parliament and so on, but we did not think in the event that it was probably right for councillors.

Q33 **Chair:** When Dame Louise came to the session just before yours, she said it was a bit timid. The building blocks were there, but it was a bit timid. It lacked some punch, to put words in her mouth.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: There was a leak into the corridor of that, so I was aware that that is a view that was given. We do not agree with that. You would expect Dame Louise to have a maternal instinct for the document she produced, and much of it was absolutely right, but we



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disagreed with those proposals. A lot of people in communities were giving us that view.

Q34 **Chair:** That your view was right or Dame Louise's view was right?

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: That our view was correct.

Q35 **Chair:** A lot of people in communities said they did not agree with Dame Louise's view, then.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: I am not sure they would characterise it in that way. They did not want an oath. They were not personalising it in that way.

Q36 **Chair:** She was also saying, in terms of being robust, that if you are here in this country, whatever culture you may have or may have had, in the end that should all be subsumed into an acceptance of British laws, because everybody should accept them and there should not be any doubt about that. She thought things like that were simply not shouted about in the Green Paper in the way they should have been, to drive a general integration policy forward.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: I would not agree with that. I agree with the view that everybody should accept the laws, but I do not agree with the view that there is any doubt about that in our response. It is a given. It is part of British values across all communities: the resident community who are not migrants and the migrant community here. Of course we expect the rule of law to be followed and we expect that to be part of fundamental British values, so let me nail that one. There is no doubt about that, and I do not think the Green Paper leaves any doubt about that, to be honest.

Q37 **Chair:** She also said that on education, particularly home schooling, she felt that, again, the response had not been robust enough. The Government is consulting again about how to do it. She asked whether we should not basically be getting on and making sure that every child is being educated in a proper and safe environment, and, what is more, that that environment is being monitored and checked.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: I am here on behalf of the Government, but it is the Department for Education rather than the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government that is looking at those particular issues with regard to yeshivas, madrasas and home education. They are looking at that and they have had a consultation that has just ended, so they will be looking at those points. Dame Louise, on that point, as on many others, makes a powerful argument. There is a case there to look at, but that is something the Department for Education is carrying forward.

Q38 **Chair:** In the end, you are here on behalf of the Government today representing the response in general to the Casey review.



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Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: We have not had the response to the consultation on that yet. That consultation has just ended.

Q39 **Chair:** When are we likely to get some action there? There is real concern around this. You heard Dame Louise's evidence to us. There is a really worry that some children are not being educated in a safe environment. They are being taken out of school, so they do not hear about British laws that contradict the views that their parents may have about the inappropriateness of those laws.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: There is a concern and I know the Department for Education has that same concern. I cannot in all fairness anticipate what their response is going to be to the consultation they have just had. I can certainly get you further information on when that is likely to be and any other relevant information, but I cannot go beyond that.

Chair: That would be helpful to the Committee.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: I will certainly do that, Chair.

Q40 **Chair:** One other thing Dame Louise was very strong about was the issue of simply integrating, getting people together and breaking down barriers. Indeed, looking at the issues that the Government are now considering, they have listed a lot of areas where efforts can be made and measures taken to bring about more integration. One of them says that there should be work with local admission authorities for schools in the integration areas to ensure the intake of schools is more representative of the wider area. How do the Government intend to do that?

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: Sorry?

Chair: How do they intend to make sure that the intake of schools is more representative of the wider area?

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: Local authorities have an important role on this, so that is something we would expect to speak to local authorities about. In relation to the five integration areas that you have just mentioned, which we sometimes call trailblazing areas, we are expecting them to set metrics for how we identify the sort of measures they are taking to try to achieve the mix that is desirable. There are particular areas where schools are not reflective of the communities they are in.

Q41 **Chair:** The point here is not necessarily about being unrepresentative of the community the school is in; it is about being unrepresentative of the wider area. You may have very homogenous and ethnically un-diverse communities or local areas from which the school draws, which are not themselves representative of the wider area. Here it says that the Government are going to address that issue in terms of admissions. How are you going to do it?



Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: The point I was making is that it is a more serious issue where you have a mixed community and yet there is still a homogenous representation in a school of a particular faith.

Q42 **Chair:** That is not what this report says. This government recommendation is talking about the intake of schools being more representative of the wider area.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: Yes, that would be true of the point I am making, with respect. What we are doing about that is talking to the local authorities and setting them the target, in discussion with them, saying, "How is it that we are able to address this particular issue to make sure that we have a more representative school, given the broader area in which it sits?" That is something that it is reasonable for us to talk to local authorities about.

Q43 **Chair:** Would that mean bussing children around on a compulsory basis?

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: I do not think so for a minute, but that is a discussion we would want to have, as to how best that can be achieved.

Chair: It is a very difficult problem.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: It is, but I do not want to start headlines running, saying that that is what we are proposing. We are in the middle of a consultation. We have not yet addressed the consultation responses. When we do that, then is the time perhaps to look at how we are going to achieve some of these goals, dependent on what we propose to carry forward after the end of the consultation.

Q44 **Chair:** There may then be a recognition that local authorities should have more powers and oversight over some of these matters.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: They have considerable powers at the moment. If they can make a compelling case that they need additional powers, I am sure we will look at that, but they have considerable powers now. There is a lot of good integration work going on in the five trailblazer areas that we speak about now, and elsewhere for that matter. If a case can be made out by local authorities or the LGA, we will expect to look at it.

Q45 **Mary Robinson:** Coming back to the oath, particularly in relation to local officials in public office, we know that trust in public office is something that people talk about a lot. Examples would point in the direction of there being an issue sometimes, but we at the same time expect people to uphold the Nolan principles of conduct in public life. What is the difference between the expectation that they would uphold those principles and asking them to pledge an oath? You intimated that the decision was 60/40. Is it something that, realistically, you may come back and look at again?

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: On the oaths?



Mary Robinson: Yes.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: I do not think so. It is not something we consulted on, for example, because we came to the clear conclusion that this was not right for the United Kingdom. It is a broader front than the Nolan principles, if I may say so. You are addressing there the oath for public office rather than the migrant oath. Giving a personal view, there is probably a stronger case to be made there, in that we have them for parliamentary activity, and we have them for the Parliament in Scotland and what effectively is now a parliament in Wales. There did not seem to be any compelling pressure for it, and indeed a lot of the representations we received were against it, so we did not think it was an appropriate thing to go forward with. It did not seem to us to be achieving much.

Q46 **Helen Hayes:** We had a lengthy discussion with Dame Louise about the funding that the Government have provided for the strategy, which is £50 million over two years. She does not seem clear about whether this is new funding, or whether part of it is the same as the funding for the integration areas, the innovation fund and the cohesion and integration network. Could you clarify that? What is new funding and how is the funding allocated?

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: Sure, let me try to do that. The £50 million, as you rightly say, is over two years. Then, hopefully, in the comprehensive spending review we will carry this forward with new funding. In relation to what it covers, it certainly covers the innovation funding that the Secretary of State has recently announced, the £7 million. It covers money that we would expect to spend in addition to the £99 million that, for the last year for which we have figures, was spent on English language. That £99 million was spent by DfE on English language provision, but any additional money would come out of that £50 million. Helen, you gave a couple of other examples.

Helen Hayes: They were the integration areas, the innovation fund and the cohesion and integration network.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: It is all out of that £50 million. We are now saying this today and you may not know it. We are providing £250,000 for uniformed organisations, which sounds a little like how I do not want it to sound, but it is the Scouts, the Guides, the Boys' Brigade and so on. That will be very useful for youth cohesion, so we have announced that today as well. That, again, would come out of that budget. The money that is in addition to the £50 million, if I could turn it on its head, would be the £99 million for English language, which is DfE money—that is what was spent in the last year for which we have figures—and the controlling migration fund. I hate the title, but a lot of positive integration money is spent out of that fund as well. That is additional to the £50 million.

Q47 **Helen Hayes:** Okay, so the £50 million is the money for integration areas, the innovation fund, the cohesion and integration network and



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uniformed organisations. Is it anything else?

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: It will be, when we respond. It is also the Windrush money, which you would have an interest in, I know. It is also the money for the holocaust memorial fund each year and Near Neighbours money. All of that comes out of the 50 million.

Q48 **Helen Hayes:** When we get to the end of the two-year period, will there be additional money for the integration strategy going beyond that timescale?

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: That will be the desire. You know it is more complex than that. We have to get Treasury consent. If you are asking whether we are going to be fighting for that, I am sure we will be. I certainly will be.

Q49 **Helen Hayes:** Dame Louise highlighted as one of her absolute top priorities poor English language skills as being a very clear barrier to social and economic mobility, and yet ESOL funding has been reduced by 50% since 2010. How will the new English language programme proposed in the Green Paper be funded? Is that the £99 million from the DfE? To what extent does that make up the cuts since 2010? To what extent is it addressing a problem over and above the provision that there was before?

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: I cannot anticipate how much of the £50 million we will announce as being for English language provision out of the integration budget until we have completed the consultation and the responses to it, but that is a key priority and it will be in addition to the money that DfE spends on it. I appreciate that a lot of this is about the money, but it is not the only thing.

I went, for example, to Peterborough recently, which is one of our integration trailblazing areas. The chief exec and the leader of the council were telling me that they had advertised for volunteers with experience of teaching English, thinking they might get a trickle of people who were interested. In fact, they had a massive number of people responding, with the right qualities and the right qualifications. I went along to a class to see them doing conversational English.

I am not saying they are doing it on the cheap, but it was tapping into an additional resource that was perhaps not immediately apparent, ticking an additional box of people who were keen to help and to put something back into society and giving them a meaningful role. The conversational classes in English that I sat through when we were in Peterborough, perhaps a month ago, showed me that there are delivery models we should be looking at to make the best of the resource we have. Do we need more money? Yes, we do. When I say that, I mean out of the £50 million budget.

Q50 **Helen Hayes:** Outside the integration areas, across the country, ESOL funding was cut very substantially, and that led to a situation where even



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the basics were not available. We had examples in my constituency of people who had been mandated by the jobcentre to learn English in order to improve their employability, and who could not access the course because the funding was not there. It really got to a very bad situation indeed after 2010. I suppose I am interested in the extent to which the new funding that is going in is making up the gap to get us back to where we were prior to 2010, or is exceeding that level of provision, in order to address the very serious challenges that Dame Louise identified in her report.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: First of all, I should say that I agree with her analysis about how important this is, based on what I have seen when visiting trailblazer areas and other areas. I went to the East End and saw how transformational this is for Bangladeshi and Pakistani women in particular, but not limited to them. It certainly is for them, so I do not need convincing of how important this is, and nor do the Department and the Government.

I was saying that it is not just about the money. It is certainly partly about the money. But, in relation to money that we already spend in the Department, I have seen the figures, and I will not embarrass them with praise or otherwise, but some areas were doing a much better job in using the resource than others. Sometimes, I have to say, the local authority provision was more effective, although not in every case.

We need to make sure that the money is spent sensibly. We need to look at how to provide conversational classes that are not so costly, but deal with everyday life. We have to recognise that a lot of people need the ability to go and shop, to go to the doctor's surgery, to go to the school with the kids and to apply for a job. These are the things that are top of the list, and conversational classes are likely to help with those. Yes, the money is important, but it is not the only aspect that we need to look at here.

Q51 **Liz Twist:** I wanted to ask about the money, and I want to make sure that I heard you correctly. We are talking about this £50 million, which is new money for this strategy, but you were talking about the £99 million currently spent by the DfE. That is what they are currently spending on ESOL. Is that right?

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: Yes, it is almost right. Sorry, forgive me; that sounded patronising. That is what they spent in the last year for which we have records. They spent £99 million on English language provision, yes. It varies a bit year on year, in other words.

Q52 **Liz Twist:** That is £99 million, but we believe that that is not enough provision as it is, and yet we only have £50 million to do a whole lot of other things. How are you going to make a real difference, as Dame Louise was suggesting we need to do, in teaching people the English language if we do not have that resource? I heard what you said about the volunteers who are doing it, and I am sure there is a place for



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conversation, as there is when I try to speak French or any other language. But, if we want to integrate people, do we not need to give them a good-quality understanding of English language, and do we not need to fund that?

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: We do. I will make a couple of points on that. Some of the volunteers are properly qualified, so it is not just people who have done other things, but we do. I am accepting that the money is important and we certainly will be expecting some of the budget to go on that. It is a budget for two years, as you rightly say, but it could provide a substantial uplift. It is also about making sure that the money is spent sensibly and that we look at innovative ways of delivery. When I stopped and looked at this in Peterborough, nobody could have questioned whether it was effective. The people there were engaged, both the teachers and the pupils.

Yes, we need more money. There will be money out of the budget that will be spent on English language provision. Do I wish we had masses more money to do all this? Of course I do, but we have to work within what we have.

Q53 **Chair:** How have you arrived at how much money is needed to make a real difference on English language?

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: If I could turn that round a little bit, we have not yet, because we have not announced the specific amount. We have fixed on the £50 million. We have had to prioritise the budget that we have and say, "This is what we can afford." It was quite a bit more than some people were expecting. It is perhaps not more than people were hoping for, but it is not an unsubstantial amount for two years. We just have to make sure that this is going to make a difference to people's lives and for integration up and down the country. It is not a scientific figure. It is the figure that we can afford and that we think is going to make a difference.

Q54 **Chair:** Normally Governments, before they commit money, do some sort of impact assessment, so I presume you have done some impact assessment within the Department about how much is needed and what effect it will have.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: We would expect to do that in relation to particular projects when we announce how much is being spent on any given policy, but we have not as yet attached it to particular policies, with a couple of exceptions.

Q55 **Chair:** You will do it with regard to the ESOL money when you eventually decide how much to spend.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: Yes, I am sure we will.

Q56 **Chair:** Again, could we have a note on that for the Committee when that is done?



Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: Of course.

- Q57 **Bob Blackman:** Can I clarify one of the things you were saying to us, Lord Bourne, in relation to the global sum of £50 million, which covers new money but also existing streams, as I understand it? Where there are existing streams—for example, you have covered faith-based and you mentioned the Holocaust Educational Trust—will those streams all continue with the funding arrangements they have at the moment, with the amount of money they have just continuing on, or will there be a potential movement of money out of one stream into another?

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: That is a very fair question, to which I am not sure of the answer, because if we had committed money it would be very difficult to make a massive variation. We would have the potential to tweak it a little but, where we have given an indication of funding to organisations like the Holocaust Education Trust, we would not expect to vary that massively, I must say.

- Q58 **Bob Blackman:** There are whole streams of these that you mentioned. I just want clarity, and I do not want to put you on the spot if you are not well positioned. It is very important, for clarity, for organisations to know that the funding commitments that have been made will continue, that this goes to a global sum of money and that the new money will go to new projects. If you cannot answer today, I do not want to put you on the spot. Having that in writing to the Committee would be very helpful.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: I would prefer to do that, if I may. I do not want to set hares running. It may be that some of these organisations have not been promised money for particular years and, if they have not, it is different, but in so far as organisations have been promised money we would not propose to vary that. If I could come back to you with specifics on that, I would be grateful.

- Q59 **Bob Blackman:** The other point on this that is important for clarification is that some of these funds, I suspect, are annual bidding rounds that they may need to bid in for to get continuation of funding.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: I know some are, because I know we are looking at some at the moment where we have not settled on specific amounts, but I cannot think that any of those are within the purview of what we are looking at, at the moment. If I could come back to you on that, I would be grateful.

- Q60 **Bob Blackman:** That would be very helpful, which then moves me on to the role of local government in implementing the strategy. How do you see the role of local government in delivering this?

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: Public authorities already have the public equality duty to abide by, but we would expect to be discussing with the LGA, and indeed with the leaders of the authorities that are the trailblazing integration areas, precisely how we look at particular projects and measure whether we are having the sort of success that we need to



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have. This is probably more challenging, but we will also need to have some discussions with voluntary organisations and third sector, which, by the very nature of them being voluntarily, would not necessarily have the resources of time and expertise that we could expect the public authorities to have.

Q61 Bob Blackman: There are certain streams of money that local authorities receive and can dispense, and others that come directly. For example, we were discussing the Prevent strategy earlier, which comes from the Home Office often direct to organisations without going anywhere near local government. Do you see that changing?

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: First of all, I am very keen, as are the Government, to differentiate this from the Prevent strategy. This is very different and we do not really want any admixture of two very different things. The relationship between Prevent and this integration sector will be very distinct and very different. This is not about Prevent in any real sense at all. I do not see that relationship changing in any way. It is just about making absolutely clear that they are two very different things.

Q62 Bob Blackman: Do you see local authorities being given a chunk of money to disburse across different programmes through local decision-making, or will this be driven by the strategy from the sector?

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: It is conceivable. Again, that is something we are out to consultation on. It is conceivable that we would give money for particular projects in the trailblazing areas and elsewhere, but I do not really want to anticipate that, because it depends on the quality of the responses that we are analysing and what people are saying to us. I do want to nail the difference from Prevent. There are authorities that we work closely with, like Leeds and Luton for example, but that is quite independent of the integration trailblazing areas, and geographically different, as it happens, as well. They are very different programmes.

Q63 Bob Blackman: Local authorities have a vast array of responsibilities. I am sure if we had someone from the Local Government Association here they would say, "It is all very well you now giving us more responsibility, but you have reduced our funding to do other things."

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: I get that every day of my life from Gary Porter, who is allegedly on my side of the argument, in the House of Lords. I understand it is a scarce resource for local authorities, as it is for Government, and we just have to try to deliver a quart pot out of a pint measure. I agree it is not easy, but all Governments and all local authorities are faced with that challenge.

Q64 Bob Blackman: Would this be covered by new burdens?

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: Yes, it would be covered by new burdens. If it was to become a statutory obligation, it would be fully within the new burdens doctrine. Notwithstanding that, we want to sit



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down with local authority leaders and people who are delivering at the sharp end from the public, voluntary and third sectors. That is the only way this is going to work. That is why I come back to the complexity of this. This is not a simple thing. This is something that we have to get right for the good of our communities, on a lasting basis.

We can glory in the success that we have already had, which is considerable. We are, broadly speaking, a well-integrated society: 85% of people feel proud to be British and think their local community is well integrated. That is a vast majority and I do not think it would be replicated anywhere else in Europe, but we must not be too complacent about that. There are challenges out there that we have identified and things that we have to deliver, and that is why we have taken longer to respond to both the Green Paper and the considerable responses that we have had from the public, both in organisational and individual terms, to ensure we seek to get this right.

Q65 Bob Blackman: Local authorities would probably argue that they need more powers on housing and education, for example, to drive integration, which might mean moving people around; it might mean driving the structure and ethnicity of different people in different areas. How do the Government see that happening?

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: This will be part of the dialogue, depending on what we are focusing on as the detailed policy response in the response we make in the autumn. If local authorities are able to say, "We are do not have any powers to do that" or, "We need to beef up the powers we have," we would expect that to be part of a dialogue. They have considerable powers; let us wait to see whether they need any new powers. If it is substantiated and they do need new powers, we will have to respond in a sensible and pragmatic way.

Q66 Bob Blackman: Local authorities, for example, might say on schooling that they have no powers over free schools and academies. Do the Government see any changes in that?

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: On free schools and academies, we have already provided for British values to be integral.

Q67 Bob Blackman: There is no real role for local authorities.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: If they need a role within what we are suggesting, we would need to respond to that in a practical and sensible way, but we need to see, first of all, what our policy response is. We would be expecting, as we look at that, to say, "Well, look, in relation to that, if we are going to do it that way, the local authorities will need more powers." We have an interest in making sure that, if we are looking to local authorities to do things, they have the power to do them, but we need to get there first, just to see whether they do.

Q68 Bob Blackman: There might be another issue, in terms of housing. When people come to this country, they naturally gravitate together with



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people who are from the same origin. That has happened in waves across London and other parts of the country. The risk is that that creates ghettoization and brings together sections of communities. If you look at London, that is particularly true and prevalent. Do you see local authorities interfering in that process and trying to disperse people, so that there are more mixed communities?

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: First of all, I fully agree with what you are saying. That has been the nature of immigration through the ages. It is nothing new, in a sense. The East End of London over successive generations has been like that, as have other cities.

This is part of a wider issue that we have with the Race Disparity Audit, which has shown, for example, that in the private rented sector BAME communities are excessively represented. Home ownership is lower among those communities and so on. We are expecting to address these issues when we look at this in the autumn, although, independent of this, we will be coming up with announcements from different Government Departments about how we are carrying forward the Race Disparity Audit. In a sense, it goes more broadly than what we are looking at, at the moment.

If we feel that, as part of that, local authorities need more powers, we have to answer that. We are looking at that broad issue about home ownership, the private rented sector and social housing within the Department at the moment. It is a very broad front and, again, a very complex issue.

Q69 **Liz Twist:** I would like to ask about the integration pilots, please.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: They are not pilots, first of all; sorry. If anybody is calling them that, they are not.

Q70 **Liz Twist:** How would you describe them?

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: As I have done, I hope: integration areas or trailblazing areas. They are not pilots, because "pilots" suggests that we are going to do stuff there and not do it anywhere else until we see the results. We may be testing innovative policies there, but that will not preclude us from doing things in other areas that are not the five trailblazing areas. Sorry; that is why I pulled you up on it, because it is just key to nail that they are not really pilots.

Q71 **Liz Twist:** They are identified integration areas where there are going to be some resources and a way of looking at strategies differently.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: Innovatively, certainly. I can appreciate where you are coming from, because it is a very fair point, but, first of all, they are volunteers, in the sense that we went to talk to the five areas to ask, "Given the fact that you have some of these challenges, would you like to work with us on some innovative approaches?" That is what we would expect to do. They are not quite pilots, in that a borough



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that is not part of those five areas would not be precluded from coming forward and saying, "Look, we would like to test this and we are applying for some innovation money to test this." It would not preclude that. Yes, we are certainly expecting to try innovative things with those five areas.

They are different communities. They all have integration challenges. Peterborough, for example, is not a community that has a large representation of people from the subcontinent; there are more from eastern Europe, for example. We have carefully chosen areas with different challenges, in order that we can learn different lessons, I suppose, and seek to apply them elsewhere. That is really what we are trying to do.

Q72 Liz Twist: Is the idea not to look at what innovative approaches work in different areas and say, "We can roll this out to other areas"?

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: Yes, it is. That is exactly what it is, but it would not preclude that from happening elsewhere. Let us say something was being tested in Walsall; it would not preclude Portsmouth, Southampton or elsewhere from coming forward with a similar idea and trying it at the same time.

Q73 Liz Twist: I am just wondering how you are going to measure the success of the various innovations that have happened and say, "This looks like something that could produce a real difference."

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: "This looks like success." That is a fair point. We will be seeking—we have not started this process yet, or, if we have, only just—to talk to local authority leaders and officials about how we seek to measure success in their communities with particular programmes that they may be pursuing in an innovative way. It is a fine distinction between pilots and trailblazing, but I wanted to give the indication that this is not stopping things happening elsewhere while we are working with the trailblazing areas. That is the point.

Q74 Liz Twist: Are you suggesting that the other areas will bid from the innovation fund money that we heard about?

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: That is an example, but it is not necessarily limited to that. Yes, that is one very clear avenue they have.

Q75 Liz Twist: How will you, or will you, be judging whether or not these projects have been a success?

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: As I say, we would seek to develop with the local authority areas, in relation to a particular programme, how we measure what success will look like for something relating to housing, schooling or encouraging social mixing of youngsters. We will have that discussion with them. After a year perhaps, we may say, "Let us look at the metrics we have set up in conjunction with you and see whether we have had the success of social mixing among young people in this particular area."



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Q76 **Liz Twist:** It sounds like it is going to be a very long and drawn-out process. One of the things that Dame Louise expressed was some frustration that we are not getting on with it, to paraphrase her.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: We are getting on with it, with respect to Dame Louise. We are getting on with it. We are making these trailblazing areas for two years. Some of the projects will be on a shorter span than two years, but we will expect to sit down against defined timescales and milestones to see how those projects are working. We have to set them up first. That is not an unreasonable timescale, and we want to get it right. I am the first person to get frustrated in the Department about timescales, but it is reasonable that something of this nature is given a little time to bed in, to see whether it is delivering against set criteria.

Q77 **Liz Twist:** It sounds to me like what we have here are some innovation trial areas—let us call them that—where we know there are particular issues, rather than a strategy for the whole of England.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: That is not quite right. There are certainly areas where we will want to try projects because they are areas of significant challenge, which is why they have been picked. As you can see, we recognise Bradford, Blackburn and all these areas as having their particular challenges. We want to see how particular projects may work there, and we will be discussing with the local authorities concerned. I have visited some of these areas myself. I have visited Peterborough, Blackburn and Bradford already, and visits are organised to the other areas as well, to talk to them about what they are doing. They have expertise. They have ideas about what they want to do. That is something we will expect to address, once again, in the autumn, when we come up with the response to the consultation we have conducted.

Q78 **Liz Twist:** Can I ask about the role of ESOL in particular? You will have heard Dame Louise's view that we know we need it, so can we just not get on with that? Is that something that you will be considering, as the outcome of the consultation is considered?

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: Yes. As I have indicated, in so far as I am able to go a bit ahead of the response, we will certainly be carrying forward English language provision, but I would not want people to think that none of this is happening at the moment. There is English language provision going on at the moment, both out of our budget and out of the Department for Education budget. Will it be ramped up? Yes, that is the anticipation because this is important stuff, and it is a fairly universal *cri de coeur* that we need to do something.

Q79 **Liz Twist:** Might that be considered as a target or an indicator for the success of some of the five area projects that we talked about?

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: Sorry, when you say "target", I am not quite sure I understand what you mean.

Q80 **Liz Twist:** If one of the key things is to increase knowledge of English



language across communities, might it not be appropriate to say we want to see an increase in people learning English and able to communicate in English within those five areas?

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: Yes, and beyond. That is clearly something we are going to be committed to. As I say, I cannot give a detailed response on the consultation and our response to it, because we are not there yet. But, in terms of the English language provision, it is safe to say that we recognise there is pretty much a universal view—that might be slightly overstating it—that we should be providing means for English language tuition up and down the country, the country being England, because devolved Administrations are different. What I have seen with my own eyes has convinced me of how important it is in Bradford, and fairly recently in the East End of London and in Peterborough, for example. I agree.

Q81 **Liz Twist:** The Green Paper suggests that various aspects of current policy will be reviewed with a view to promoting integration. When will that work start?

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: All Governments have been targeted with looking at integration, and all Government Departments have been targeted with looking at the Race Disparity Audit and its implications to deliver on that. In a sense, they are part of a broader tapestry with the Lammy review, the McGregor-Smith review and so on. A lot of this is happening already. The integration Green Paper, our public response to it and then our policy is vital, but it is not the only part of what is happening. A lot of this is happening already but, in terms of the response we are making, that will be in the autumn.

Q82 **Liz Twist:** Finally, when do you think the integration strategy will begin to show results?

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: That is a very good question. There are different levels. On the English language provision, it could begin to show results perhaps much more quickly than some of the more challenging aspects of it. Changing the nature of a neighbourhood in a big city that is predominantly of one faith or one race, or a school, may be more challenging. I would hesitate to say how long that would take, but it would take longer than looking at the success of ensuring that people have English language provision more quickly.

All of the government policy is feeding in to this, to seek to do this. These are important challenges. Local authorities, to be fair, are already committed to doing a lot of this, but there are, in some communities, challenges that are going to take a lot longer before we see massive turnaround.

Q83 **Liz Twist:** How will you know when you have succeeded, in part or whole?



Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: It is an ongoing thing, first of all, as you have perhaps just indicated with the follow-up. You can never say, "Job done." It will be about continually refreshing the policy, and looking at communities and the challenges that we have. It would be dangerous to say, "Job done." There will be agreed, with public authorities and perhaps with Government Departments, set milestones that we seek to achieve against particular timescales. That is the sort of thing that we are looking at on the Race Disparity Audit as well.

Q84 **Liz Twist:** Perhaps it could be milestones achieved.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: Yes.

Q85 **Chair:** Just to follow up on a point that Liz drew out there, which is quite important, in terms of the trailblazing areas, as we are now going to call them, the money for those areas may come from the innovation fund, where they are doing innovative things, but there may be some extra some money for those areas from the total £50 million.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: Yes.

Q86 **Chair:** If other areas, therefore, want to join in the trailblazing activities, will they get funded just from the innovation fund or will there be any extra money for them as well?

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: We are going into a degree of detail that is really something we would expect to cover in the response, but in principle integration trailblazing areas could be funded out of the innovation budget. The innovation budget could go to particular charities or third-sector organisations as well, provided that they convince us that they are doing something that is innovative and is generally bringing communities together. It does not have to be public authority driven. I am sure we are not precluding provision of money to local authorities or other organisations outside the trailblazing areas within the two years either, so that is also a potential.

Q87 **Chair:** That would come from the wider £50 million and not from the innovation fund.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: It could come from both.

Q88 **Chair:** I thought the innovation fund did not fund schemes that local authorities organised. It has to be independent organisations, does it not?

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: Yes, it does. Sorry; I thought you were talking about independent organisations with the trailblazing areas.

Q89 **Chair:** No, I am saying there may be things that need to happen or are being promoted in areas that are not trailblazing, but are looking to do work as well. I was asking what sources of funding may be available for them, particularly if it is the local authority that wants to do something in those areas.



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Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: If it is a local authority, yes, it could come out of the £50 million, but in relation to voluntary or third sector it could come out of the innovation fund.

Q90 **Chair:** Coming on to the innovation fund finally, we had this conversation with Dame Louise earlier. Innovation is always interesting. It is often a good thing: new ideas and new ways of doing things. Is there not always a concern that money is then found for something new or different in an area, when a very good scheme already exists, sometimes produced by and run by local voluntary organisations, where they are living from hand to mouth? Their funding has been cut. Local authorities have lost money, so that organisation has lost money. Some very worthwhile schemes can hardly keep going, and yet the money comes for something new next door. Is that not a concern sometimes?

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: It is something we need to watch like a hawk. It is a very fair point, but we want to look at innovation as well, because sometimes innovation is the key to unlocking something. Often, you suddenly think of something that is fairly simple but quite a brilliant idea, and it is innovative. I agree that, if you have a tried and tested way of doing something, that should not preclude money and human resources going to those particular projects.

Q91 **Chair:** It goes to the organisation. It cannot go to fund things they are already doing, can it? Looking at the criteria for the innovation fund, it cannot.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: No, for the innovation fund, it cannot.

Q92 **Chair:** I am thinking of a very good example. The previous Secretary of State came to Darwen Wellbeing in my constituency, which is a brilliant voluntary organisation that pulls people together from the White British, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Somali and Slovak-Roma communities in this area. When 200 people turn up to an organisation's AGM simply because they are interested, you know they are doing something right, but they are struggling for funds. How do they get help?

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: There are many strands in the Green Paper. We are helping fresh migrants. We are helping youth organisations. All these things we are seeking to do out of any potential bids within the scope of the Green Paper. If a local authority came forward with an existing scheme and said, "Look, we want to extend this to cover X, Y and Z", that is something we could fund. There might be a new scheme in an area that is not Sheffield. Perhaps Hull wants to fund something that Sheffield has been doing successfully, and says, "Look, we have seen what is done in Sheffield. We would like to do this."

Q93 **Chair:** An extension to existing work, therefore, could come within the innovation fund.



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Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: I would think so, yes, in a new area. Even if it does not come within the innovation fund, it could still be funded out of the £50 million.

Q94 **Chair:** Bids could come in for money outside the innovation fund.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: Yes, for sure.

Q95 **Chair:** That is interesting. It would be helpful to feed that back.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: Sorry, I perhaps should have made that clear.

Chair: I appreciate you are still working these things through.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: We are. I am slightly thinking on my feet on this. It may not be eligible for innovation funding. I am getting a note; I have dropped at least one ball here. Innovation funding is for applications to scale up existing projects, so it can be, if they are interested in growing—there is a word I cannot read—small-scale projects. Yes, the innovation fund can be used to scale up existing projects, but money could be found elsewhere within the budget as well.

Chair: Okay. Minister, thank you very much for coming and answering our questions this afternoon. You will probably come back with one or two additional points.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: Indeed, I have officials who want to pick those up. Thank you very much indeed, Chair.

Chair: Thank you very much. That brings us to the end of our public proceedings for today.