Research reports

Country context paper – UK

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1-UK

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The Attitudes to Migrants, Communication and Local Leadership project (AMICALL) is a project co-financed by the European Fund for the Integration of Third Country Nationals, to establish a transnational learning network which will identify, share and disseminate knowledge, experience and good practices among Europe's local and regional authorities (LRAs) in communicating with local citizens about migration and integration of third-country nationals to address tensions and build public understanding. AMICALL is delivered by a partnership including the Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS) at Oxford University, UK; Central European University, Budapest, Hungary; the european forum for migration studies (efms) at the University of Bamberg, Germany; the Faculty of Social Sciences at Erasmus University Rotterdam, Netherlands; the Fundación José Ortega y Gasset, Madrid, Spain; and the Council of Europe.

This country context paper reviews the context of the project in the UK, giving an overview of the migration profile, integration philosophy, attitudes to migrants and local and regional authority structure in the country. It is intended both to ground and guide UK case study fieldwork for the project, and to provide the necessary context for developing transnational comparison and knowledge exchange.

a. Broad overview of the migration profile of the UK

Migration history

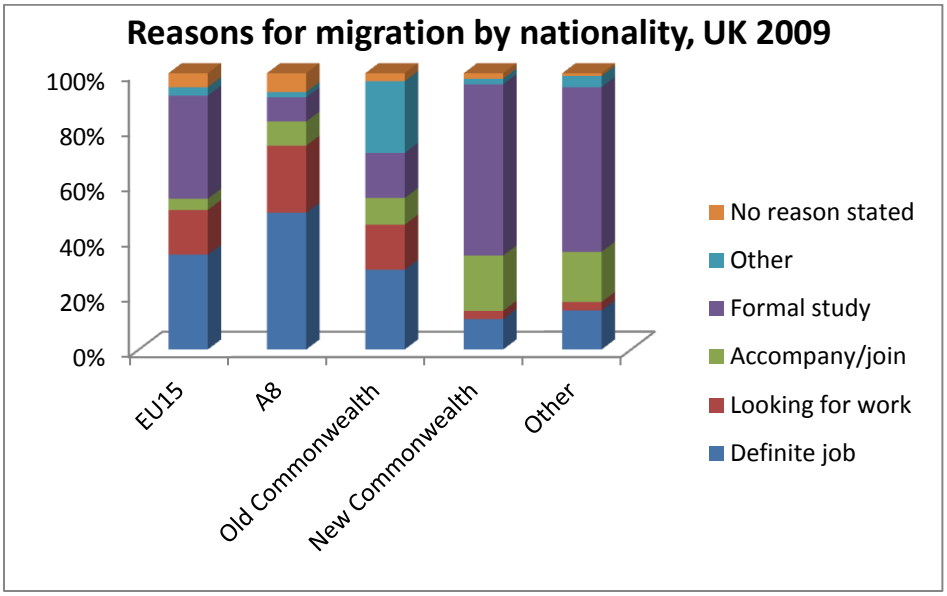
Britain has historically been a country of both emigration and immigration. At the beginning of the 20th century and again after the 1960s and up to the 1980s Britain was a country of net *emigration*, particularly to countries linked with Britain's imperial past, like Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and North America. In terms of *immigration,* before the mid-20th century, major immigrant groups historically included European Jews and Irish. After the second world war, citizens from British colonies in the Caribbean, South Asia and Africa, which became the 'New' Commonwealth countries, were encouraged to move to Britain on a large scale to fill gaps in specific economic sectors: for example, transport and the National Health Service (NHS) in London and the South East, textile industries in the North of England, and vehicle manufacturing and foundry work in the West Midlands (Layton-Henry, 1985). This movement of workers set the scene for the arrival and settlement of families, at different time periods for different groups, and in the context of increasingly restrictive immigration and settlement policies over the second half of the 20th century.

The second major immigration wave to Britain over the last half century was that of refugees and asylum seekers fleeing political conflict in countries in Africa, Asia and Europe, starting with those from former colonies - for example, East African Asians, Cypriots, Bangladeshis - and later expanding to include a vast diversity of population categories, such as Somalis, Kurds from Turkey, Bosnians, Tamils from Sri Lanka, Afghans and Iraqis. While large numbers originally settled in London, dispersal policies from the late 1990s onwards aimed at easing pressure on resources in the capital and the South East, contributed to changing the demographic landscape of Britain, as asylum seekers were channelled towards urban areas that had little previous experience of international in-migration (Hynes, 2009). Further, and starker, demographic change came about in the past half decade through the arrival of labour migrants from Eastern and Central parts of Europe as their countries acceded to the European Union (EU) in 2004 and 2007. A distinctive feature of this third large scale immigration wave is the settlement of migrants in 'new immigrant gateways' because of the demand for their labour in agricultural and food processing industries located in rural or semi-rural areas at some distance from the metropolitan areas of residence of previous migration waves. These settlement patterns have led to sudden large population increases in some local areas, resulting in pressure on housing, schools and health services, and public attitudes to migrants (Audit Commission, 2007).

Categories of migrants

Arising from these migration patterns, enormous diversity by country of origin, nationality, reasons for migration and immigration status characterises the present day non-UK born population. Immigration status is generally defined by reasons for migrating, such as for work, for marriage or to join families, to study, or to seek asylum.

Figure 1



Source: Calculated from Long-term international migration, estimates from the International Passenger Survey: annual data 2009, Table 3.08. http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=15054

Figure 1 shows the main reasons for migration given by people of different nationalities coming to live in the UK for at least 12 months in 2009. Among all nationalities, coming to study is the most commonly stated reason for migration at present – 37% in 2009, exceeding the percentage (34%) coming for employment (ONS, 2010); it can be seen in Figure 1 that students form the largest category among migrant flows from the New Commonwealth countries, demonstrating how this category has taken over from the predominance of labour and family migration of previous decades. Figure 1 also shows the preponderance of labour migrants among people arriving from EU Accession countries, and the relative diversity of reasons for migration among those from the Old Commonwealth (e.g. Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa).

Recent data on asylum seekers, published by the Home Office, shows that the number of asylum applications as well as the number granted settlement as refugees have been falling over the past decade. There has been a drop of more than two thirds in asylum applications since 2000 and the number granted asylum has reduced by around three fifths (Home Office, 2010). Finally, one category of migrant for which official statistics do not exist is that of undocumented migrants, including refused asylum seekers, those entering the UK illegally and visa overstayers. By nature of this category, precise numbers are difficult to locate: in 2007 there were estimated to be over 600,000 irregular migrants living in the UK, with the largest proportion to be found in London (Gordon et al, 2009).

As a result of its imperial past and close links with former colonies ('old' and 'new' Commonwealth countries), the UK is unique among many European countries in having a long established migrant population with citizenship rights, and their second and subsequent generations of British born children.

It can be seen in Table 1 that over half of people in many of the major New Commonwealth ethnic categories are born in the UK, and that the overwhelming majority (over 70%) have UK nationality.

Table 1: Percentages of UK born and UK nationals by ethnicity, UK, 2009-2010

Ethnic group	% UK born	% UK nationality
British	97.6	99.4
Other White	38.1	40.6
Mixed	82.4	88.5
Indian	40.8	72.7
Pakistani	58.8	84.2
Bangladeshi	51.0	81.3
Other Asian	26.7	55.2
Black Caribbean	63.0	87.9
Black African	35.6	57.8
Other Black	59.0	70.4
Chinese	23.7	46.2
Other	24.2	42.3
Total number[1]	52,476,368	55,039,999

[1] Total number after missing values for the specific variables were taken out.

Source: Annual Population Survey, July 2009-June2010

b. Broad overview of migration/integration policy in the UK

The dominant integration philosophy and the development of any kind of national integration policy in Britain need to be viewed initially in the context of the position and rights of people from British colonies and ex-colonies coming to settle in Britain. Being seen by policy makers and the Public largely as 'ethnic minorities' than 'migrants' has had an effect of inhibiting the development of policies around *migrant* integration, with debate focusing more on strong borders to keep newcomers out on the one hand, and the promotion of good 'race relations' and later, multicultural and equalities policies for 'minorities' within Britain on the other – for example, through the Race Relations Act 1976 (which protected people from discrimination on the basis of national origin) and the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 (which brought in a general duty on public authorities to actively promote equality of opportunity and good relations between people of different racial groups). At the same time, from the 1960s to the 1980s, the rights of colonial and ex-colonial citizens to settle in the UK were being eroded by a series of legislations: for example, the 1962 and 1968 Commonwealth Immigrants Act, and the 1971 Immigration Act, sharpening the distinction between those who had close family ties to Britain by descent and those, especially of Caribbean, African and Asian origin, who did not.

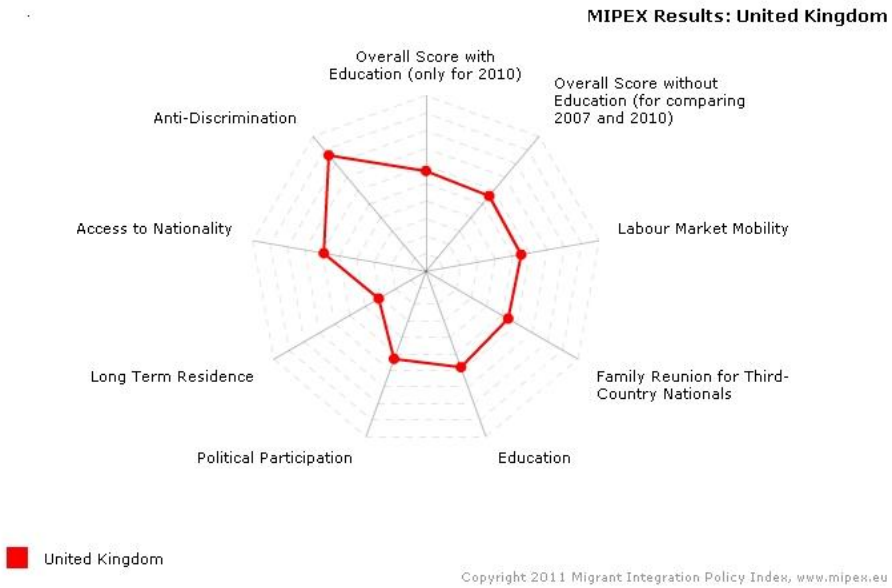
Before the turn of the 21st century the idea of integration, seen as too close to assimilation (adopting the values, norms, and behaviour of the host society) was contested by academics, anti-racist activists, civil society and migrant organisations who argued in favour of anti-racism and equality, and multiculturalism and diversity – that is, respect for and promotion of minority cultural identity and difference. The positive value of cultural diversity was enshrined in public services, for example through

delivery of services in the mother tongues of migrants and their children. The 2001 riots in Northern English mill towns with significant South Asian populations, and the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the US, as well the July 2005 bombings in London carried out by British born Muslims, led to questioning by commentators from both the political left and right whether multiculturalism fostered division and segregation rather than solidarity. A policy emphasis on 'community cohesion' and a re-working of the concept of integration, largely focusing on how people from different backgrounds get on together and have a shared sense of belonging and responsibility to their local areas as well as to the country, developed out of this but was not particularly focused on recent migrants (Denham, 2001). However, the Commission on Integration and Cohesion (CIC), in its report *Our Shared Future,* placed a key emphasis on the relation between established residents and new arrivals, and defined 'cohesion' and 'integration in the following way: 'cohesion is principally the process that must happen in all communities to ensure different groups of people get on well together; while integration is principally the process that ensures new residents and existing residents adapt to one another' (Commission on Integration and Cohesion, 2007, p.9).

Before this, where it existed policy explicitly focusing on integration of migrants was aimed specifically at refugees, reflecting their numerical importance (see Section a) and the close link between immigration policy and integration policy in the UK. The National Strategy for Refugee Integration, *Integration Matters,* launched in 2005, was based on ten years of prior research reviewing evidence and interventions (Castles et al, 2001; Ager and Strang, 2004). This strategy, and interventions based on it, strongly emphasised economic (and specifically labour market) integration, and tended to emphasise what was expected of refugees, rather than the idea that integration might be a dynamic two-way process. While family reunification migrants and students now make up two of the largest categories of migrants, there has been little or no policy focus on them. Labour migrants (including those from the EU Accession countries) also feature in policy debates, but again with no emphasis on integration. Instead, debates have focused on how to select the best quality skilled labour migrants (the points-based system adopted under the last government's 'managed migration' policies) and how to reduce labour migration (the capping policy adopted by the current government in 2010).

The anomalous position of migrant integration is reflected in the fact that it falls between several government departments: the UK Border Agency (UKBA) responsible for border control, the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) within whose remit community cohesion falls, and Government Equality Office which leads on discrimination. With no broad integration strategy, Britain has also been one of the slower EU countries to respond to post-2000 policy initiatives around integration, although formally signed up the European Commission's Common Basic Principles on Integration.

Figure 2



Despite the UK's chequered history in migrant integration policies, in the most recent (2010) Migration Policy Index (MIPEX) UK was ranked as 'halfway favourable' at joint 12th (with Germany) of the 31 European and North American countries. As Figure 2 shows the UK has an exceptionally high ranking in anti-discrimination policies.

c. Overview of attitudes to migrants in the UK

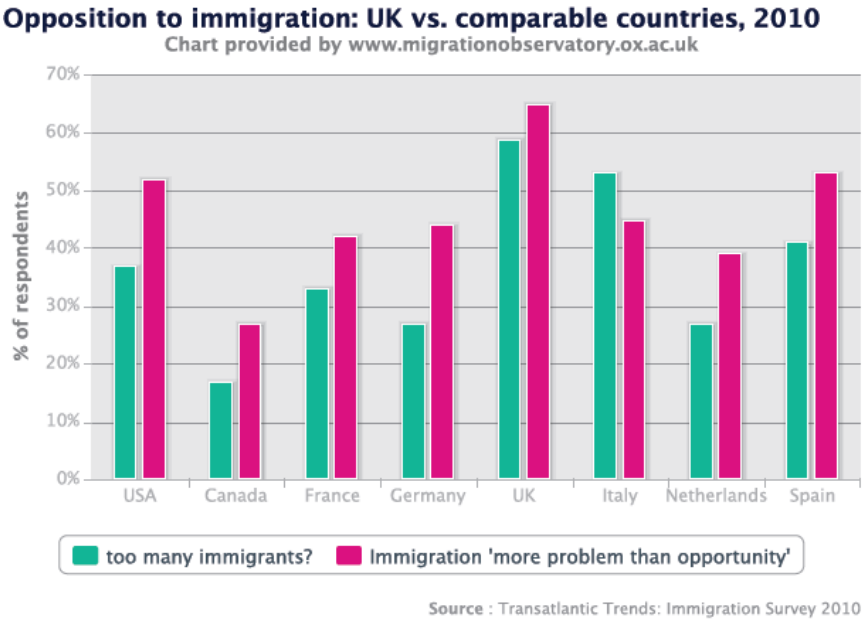
According to most recent public opinion surveys and polls, the majority of people in the UK favour reduced immigration. In the 2009-2010 Citizenship Survey, over 75% of respondents felt that immigration should be reduced either a lot or a little. Although non-UK born respondents were less likely than UK born respondents to want less immigration, over 50% expressed a preference for reductions, as did a similar percentage among ethnic minority respondents (Blinder, 2011). Taking into account changes in question wording and response scales used, there appears to be a uniform trend in opposition to immigration among respondents in polls and surveys from the mid-1960s onwards.

Recent poll results show that immigration (taken together with 'race relations') has grown to be among the most important issues highlighted by respondents in the UK since the beginning of this century, together with the economy, the NHS, crime and education. So far December 2007 has been the peak, when 46% of respondents in an Ipsos-MORI poll named race relations/immigration as one of the most important issues (Blinder, 2011). There is also evidence that concern about immigration is higher at present in the UK compared to other European or North American countries, when measured using the same questions within a cross-national survey. Evidence from the Transatlantic Trends survey shows that higher percentages of respondents in the UK feel that there are already too many immigrants and see immigration as a problem (see Figure 3). UK respondents are also more likely than those in other European countries or Canada to feel that immigration is an issue that will affect the performance of political parties at elections (Blinder, 2011).

There is some indication from polls and surveys that while there is general opposition to immigration, support for the admittance of some specific categories of migrants exists, especially where there are

clear labour market gaps – such as in the case of care workers or health professionals – or there is humanitarian concern – such as in the case of some asylum seekers at risk of torture in countries of origin. However, the existing evidence needs cautious interpretation, and more robust research in this area is needed (Crawley, 2005; Blinder, 2011). Respondents are also less likely to be negative about migrants in their own neighbourhoods than about migration levels in the country, in general.

Figure 3



Anti-migrant political movements

In a recent article in *openDemocracy* Les Back and Alex Rhys-Taylor argue that recent forms of xenophobia in Europe relate to three factors: the de-stabilisation of major past patterns of post-colonial and post-communist migrant flows in Europe and growing heterogeneity of international mobility; the impact of the continued 'war on terror' in Iraq and Afghanistan on feelings of fear, suspicion and hatred; and the political integration of Europe in the context of economic instability, which in Britain's case has been associated with a significant increase in numbers of new migrants from Accession countries over the past half decade (Back and Rhys-Taylor, 2011). The main anti-migrant national political parties in Britain at present are the British National Party (BNP), formed as a splinter group of the far-right, White-only political party, the National Front, in 1982, and the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), a Eurosceptic national conservative party. In addition, the English Defence League (EDL) has risen since 2009 as a movement - rather than a political party - seeking to mobilise people largely through marches around anti-Islamic sentiment and traditional patriotism, held in urban centres. It has a base among both some middle/upper class intellectuals (mainly through the internet) with a greater focus on culture and religion rather than on ethnicity and race; and 'football hooligans' with anti-foreign and anti-immigrant sentiments, who are prominent in marches (Gidley, 2010).

Although routinely portrayed as 'extremist' in the mainstream media, the BNP have won a handful of municipal seats since the early 1990s, originally in inner city London but increasingly in smaller,

depressed post-industrial towns and in outer city areas associated with 'white flight.' The party came fifth in the 2008 London mayoral election, gaining 5.2% of the vote and one of 25 seats in the London Assembly. In 2009 it won two seats in the European Parliament.[1] This was the high tide in its electoral fortunes, forcing some recognition from the mainstream media – symbolised by its leader, Nick Griffin, controversially being invited onto BBC television's *Question Time*, a popular weekly political debate show in late 2009; in Griffin's words, they had made the transition from a 'large small party' to a 'small large party'. In the European Parliament, the BNP is one of the "Non-Inscrits": parties who do not sit with one of the recognised political groups. Its support base has declined since then, with the party getting only 1.9% of the vote in the British General Election in 2010 (however, amounting to half a million votes overall) and failing to win any seats.[2] In 2010 local elections, the party lost all 12 seats in the London borough of Barking and Dagenham gained in 2006.[3] In the 2011 local elections the BNP lost 11 of its 13 local council seats.[4]

UKIP currently has 11 seats in the European parliament, and two in the House of Lords. In the European parliament its sits with the right-wing Europe of Freedom and Democracy Group (which also includes Italy's Lega Nord and the Netherlands' Reformed Political Party), although its members in the House of Lords have maintained links with Geert Wilders and his Party of Freedom. It did relatively well in the 2010 General Election, achieving 3.1% of the vote but not gaining any seats although becoming the fourth largest party in terms of the popular vote. It also gained councillors across England in the local elections (see footnotes 1, 2, 3). Hostility to immigration, rather than to the European Union, has been an increasingly prominent feature in recent years.

According to analysis, the socio-demographic support base of far-right anti-migrant parties is largely made up of members of (skilled) working classes with poor levels of formal education, who have the most to lose from diversity, and gaining their information from xenophobic tabloid newspapers such as the Daily Mail and the Sun. Compared to far-right supporters in the 1970s they are older and more likely to come from the North of England (Goodwin, 2011). While a diverse range of issues may be important, anti-immigrant hostility is the most important predictor of far-right political support. For instance, recent research has shown that among BNP voters almost three quarters stated that the government should encourage immigrants and their families, including those born in Britain, to leave the country, almost three fifths thought that most crimes are committed by immigrants, and almost half thought employers should favour whites over non-whites. Geographical context is important: even after controlling for individual educational and employment status, support for the BNP was heavily concentrated in areas where educational levels were low and employment rates were high. There was also a positive relationship between BNP support and the presence of a large Pakistani or Bangladeshi Muslim local population, while this relationship did not hold for non-Muslim Asians or Black British (Goodwin, 2011). Analysis of the BNP's membership, based on a leaked database in 2008, showed an overlapping but more educated profile with 17% professionals or managers, 13% self-employed and 28%

[1] http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/bsp/hi/elections/euro/09/html/ukregion_999999.stm
[2] http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/election2010/results/
[3] http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/election2010/council/html/3892.stm
[4] http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/special/election2011/council/html/england.stm

in the police, prison service, armed forces or security sectors, geographically concentrated in deprived areas but with 16% in well off areas (Basketter 2008).

d. Overview of governance structures in the UK

Local government structure

At the highest level, the United Kingdom is a union of four constituent nations, England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, each with distinctive identities and distinctive systems of governance and law. In the first two years of the 1997 Labour government, the Good Friday peace agreement in Northern Ireland and referenda in Scotland and Wales resulted in significant further devolution of power to elected legislatures (the Welsh Assembly, the Scottish Parliament, the Northern Ireland Assembly) in those nations.

Within England, there has been a regional tier of government below the level of the nation. The nine regions of England, along with the three non-English devolved nations, correspond to the designation of NUTS 1 in European Union nomenclature (parallel to German states). The Conservative Government had set up 'regional' government offices in the 1990s each representing the functions of national government in the region. After 1997 these were supplemented by regional development agencies, responsible for co-ordinating economic development across each region; regional associations of local government, with no formal remit but bringing together representatives of all of the local authorities in each region; and regional structures relating to migration issues. There were referenda in two of the regions on the creation of a directly elected legislative assembly; the referendum in London in 1998 led to the creation of the Greater London Assembly and a directly elected mayor for London, while the referendum in the North East in 2004 resulted in a vote against devolution, and further English regional devolution plans were put on hold.

Since the election of the Coalition government in May 2010, this regional tier of government has been partially dismantled, with the government offices and regional development agencies dissolved. Newer units are being created with a much smaller bureaucracy and at a lower geographical scale, although policy in this area remains in flux.

Across the UK, the overall local government structure is organised into either one-tier or two-tier systems. In most of England, there are two levels: a county council and a district council. Counties (or shires) are ancient administrative units in England. County councils cover large areas and provide most public services, including schools, social services, and public transportation. They include six modern metropolitan counties in large urban conurbations, as well as 27 older non-metropolitan or 'shire' counties. Larger counties correspond to NUTS 2 territorial units in EU nomenclature (parallel to Dutch provinces, Spanish autonomous communities or Italian regions), while smaller counties correspond to NUTS 3 units (parallel to Hungarian counties, German districts or Italian provinces). Each county is divided into several districts. District councils cover smaller areas and provide more local services, including, gyms and leisure facilities, local planning, recycling and waste collection. Some districts have borough status, granted by royal charter, sometimes as far back as medieval times, but this status is not accompanied by any additional powers or responsibilities.

In most large towns and cities, and in some small counties, there will be just one level of local government responsible for all local services. These are called a 'unitary authority'. Depending where they are in the country, these may be called metropolitan district councils, borough councils, city councils, county councils, or district councils. At the level of the unitary authority or equivalent, there are Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs), made up of representatives of local government but also other agencies, such as the police, health service and civil society, who are responsible for planning overall service provision. Larger unitary authorities and districts correspond to the NUTS 3 level territorial units in EU nomenclature, smaller ones to what was formerly the NUTS 4, now known as LAU 1.

In London, each borough is a unitary authority, but the Greater London Authority (led by the Mayor and Assembly) provides London-wide governance function with responsibility for certain services such as transport and police. In April 2009, unitary authorities were introduced in seven regions in England, reducing 44 local authorities down to just nine. In Scotland there is a unitary system with one level of local government. In Northern Ireland, there are local councils, but most services are carried out by other organisations.

Some local authorities share services covering a wider area, like police, fire services and public transport. This may be done to avoid splitting up services when council structures are changed, or because some councils are too small to run an effective service on their own. This is a policy the current national government is encouraging, and there are likely to be increasing examples of cross-local authority service delivery or joint commissioning.

All local authorities are made up of wards, the smallest electoral and administrative unit. In urban areas the wards within a local authority area generally contain roughly the same number of electors and elect three councillors. In local authorities with mixed urban and rural areas the number of councillors may vary from one to three depending on the size of the electorate. Wards correspond to the LAU 2 level in EU nomenclature (parallel to Spanish, German or Dutch municipalities, or Hungarian *Települések*).

In some parts of England there are town and parish councils, covering a smaller area than the local authorities. In Wales, they are called community councils. These are responsible for services like allotments, public toilets, parks and ponds, war memorials, and local halls and community centres. They are sometimes described as the third tier of local government. In Scotland there are community councils with fewer powers. There is no equivalent in Northern Ireland. In other areas, councils have experimented with forms of participatory democracy at this lower geographical scale, such as ward assemblies, neighbourhood forums and community councils.

Local government powers

Local authorities have a wide range of powers and duties. Historically local authorities in Britain have been 'creatures of statute', empowered or instructed to carry forward only the specific functions devolved to particular levels of local government. Since 2000 these strictly defined powers have been supplemented by a power 'to improve well-being introduced in 2000 to give local authorities the statutory powers necessary to allow them to play their full part in improving the quality of life for local people' (DCLG, 2008: p.1). National policy is set by central government, but local councils are responsible for all day-to-day services and local matters. They are funded by government grants, Council Tax and business rates. Local authorities work within the powers laid down under various Acts of

Parliament. Some are mandatory or statutory, which means that the authority must do what is required by law. Others are discretionary, allowing an authority to provide services if it wishes. In certain cases, ministers have powers to ensure consistent standards to safeguard public health or to protect the rights of individual citizens. Where local authorities exceed their statutory powers, they are regarded as acting outside the law and can be challenged in court.

The main link between local authorities and central government in England is the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG). It is responsible for national policy on how local government is set up, what it does, how well it works, and how it is funded. Other central government departments deal with national policy on local services, in particular: Department for Children, Schools and Families, Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Department of Health and Department for Transport. In Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, local authorities now work mainly with the devolved governments.

Democratic, consultative and bureaucratic structures

Local councils are mostly accountable to elected councillors who are voted for by local people. Councillors are responsible for making decisions on behalf of the community about local services, for example rubbish collection and leisure facilities, and agreeing budgets and Council Tax charges. Each councillor represents an area called a ward, serving for four years. There are more than 20,000 elected councillors in England and Wales, representing their communities in 410 local authorities. The work of a councillor includes holding surgeries to help local people, supporting local organisations, campaigning on local issues, and developing links with all parts of the community. Councillors are not paid a salary or wages, but they are entitled to allowances and expenses to cover some of the costs of carrying out their public duties. The elected councillors provide the policies, and then paid employees (council officers) put them into practice. Advice surgeries held by councillors are available for local people to ask for help or advice, make a complaint or enquire about local authority services.

Councils have different ways of making decisions. In most councils, the leader of the party with the largest number of councillors is leader of the council (in these councils, there may additionally be a rotating mayor, whose role is largely symbolic). In a smaller number of councils, there are directly elected mayors with considerable executive powers. Since 2000 most councils in England have had a small executive group or cabinet that is responsible for the overall business of the council. Its decisions are subject to scrutiny by a different group of councillors who meet in overview and scrutiny panels, to check and monitor what the council does. Smaller councils often have a committee structure dealing with separate aspects of the council's business, rather than having executive and scrutiny panels.

Local people can attend most meetings of the council, although usually they will not be able to speak at them. Every council must publish a 'forward work plan' listing the decisions that will be taken over the coming months. They also publish meeting papers at least five working days in advance, and afterwards they publish the minutes of the meeting, summarising the decisions made. Local authorities may exclude the public from meetings and withhold papers only in limited circumstances.

To be eligible to stand as a local councillor, a candidate needs to be at least 18 years old and a British, Commonwealth, Irish or European Union citizen. One or more of the following requirements also apply: being registered to vote in the area; renting or owning land or premises in the area for the whole of the

last 12 months; have a main job in the area during the last 12 months; have lived in the area for the whole of the last 12 months. Anyone not belonging to a political party can stand as an independent councillor. Commonwealth and Irish citizens can vote in all elections; EU nationals in local authority elections; and other third country nationals in no elections. [5]

[5] http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Governmentcitizensandrights/UKgovernment/Localgovernment/DG_073310

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