BRADFORD REPORT

FEBRUARY 2017
CONTEXT

Bradford is an ethnically diverse city with a long history of immigration. It has a higher population of residents born outside of the UK (16.2%) than the UK average (13.3%), as well as other Yorkshire cities such as Leeds and Sheffield. While 65% per cent of Bradford’s residents identify themselves as being white British, Bradford has the largest population of people of Pakistani ethnicity (20% of the population) of any local authority in the UK. Many of them are from the Mirpur region of Pakistani Kashmir, a migration which began in the 1950s and continues to this day.

Today, Pakistanis are estimated to be the second largest group of new arrivals in the city. The largest group of new arrivals from the EU are from Poland, but there are also significant populations of Romanians and Slovaks. Asylum-seekers have been dispersed to Bradford for nearly 20 years, with Home Office statistics showing 794 asylum-seekers being supported in the city as of 30 September 2016. Around 2,000 international students live in the city, most studying at the university. Residential and social segregation have historically been highlighted as concerns, for example in the 2011 Ouseley Report, while a lively civic society and effective council worked hard to ensure communities live well together.
A stakeholder meeting was held with 24 representatives from the local authority, third sector organisations and business groups. They were asked questions about attitudes to migration in the local area, and the future policy approaches they wanted to see in relation to EU migration and non-EU migration. Questions also probed the changes that would be needed to achieve a consensus on immigration. The stakeholder group was also asked about the impact of migration in the local area and about integration issues that had arisen. Again, the stakeholder group was asked about policy changes that would better address issues that had arisen in the city.

Later, a citizens’ panel was held with nine members of the public recruited to represent a range of views on immigration, with the very sceptical and very pro-migration filtered out through a pre-interview screening question. Further demographic information about the group is given at the end of this report. The panel was asked questions about the impact of migration, EU and non-EU migration and their perceptions about integration. The citizens’ panel also looked at securing a consensus, with participants asked about what needs to change in order to gain their trust and broad support for how the Government handles immigration and integration.
KEY FINDINGS

A series of questions asked the citizens’ panel and stakeholders about the impact of immigration, attitudes towards immigration, EU and non-EU migration, asylum seekers and refugees, and Integration. These were framed in both the national and local context.

Attitudes towards immigration

Generally, the panel had concerns about EU migration flows into the city, but told a more optimistic story about integration. They were asked ‘on a scale of 1-10 do you feel that immigration has had a positive or negative impact on the UK, nationally and in your local community’. Their average score was 5.4 with a range of four to seven.

The stakeholder meeting felt that attitudes towards immigration were mixed in Bradford, though hostility towards EU and non-EU migrants had worsened since the referendum. It was suggested that negative attitudes to immigration were linked directly to austerity and poverty in the city, with residents in the city “struggling and suffering” under conditions of job insecurity. There was a general understanding that those in precarious situations were likely to adopt sceptical attitudes:

“We come across a lot of people living in areas where the Eastern Europeans and asylum seeker and refugee communities are living, and they say it’s alright for you in your middle class areas but it’s happening to all of us over-again and again, we’re the ones who are suffering and feeling the pressures on public services.” (Local Authority representative).

EU migration

Business voices highlighted the importance of migrant labour to their survival, but citizens’ panel showed divided opinion on EU migration. Just one participant thought that free movement rules should be maintained, while the majority supported treating EU and non-EU migrants in the same manner.

“If we’re going to go through Brexit and we’re going to be on our own, people should be treated the same” (Citizens’ panel participant).

While the majority of citizens’ panel participants wanted reductions in the numbers of low-skilled migration from the EU, there was no resentment of those who were judged to be contributing to the economy.

“I’ve no problem with people coming here and working hard, and contributing and paying taxes.” (Citizens’ panel participant).

The citizens’ panel was unanimous that EU migrants who were here should be allowed to stay. The stakeholder panel was concerned that the Home Office would not have the capacity to process applications
You see more and more cases that are just being dealt with less and less well... There are three million people who will have to prove their connection to Britain. And there’s absolutely no way a reduced Home Office staff can handle that. There’s a lot of anguish there.” (Stakeholder).

Non-EU Migration

Employers believed that the tight restrictions on non-EU Tier 2 work visa migration had made it difficult to recruit staff from outside the EU and were concerned at the effects this may have on business and public services. Stakeholders believed that members of the South Asian community here voted for Brexit out of frustration, as they felt very strongly that the visa system for non-EU migrants was discriminatory whilst EU nationals had free movement. (This assertion was not supported in ward-based voting data, which showed the inner city wards with large South Asian populations voted Remain). Others felt that the differences between migrant groups had been exploited in the EU referendum.

Many people in the stakeholders’ group spoke about community frustrations concerning family migration, with Bradford families unable to bring in spouses and children because they could not meet the minimum income threshold. In some cases unscrupulous immigration solicitors had exploited this issue, charging high fees for poor quality advice and representation.

The citizens’ panel expressed similar concerns with non-EU migration as with EU migration: the need for better vetting processes that would attract skilled workers with fluent English. Many linked immigration to increased crime rates, and thought that migrants and minority ethnic groups were over-represented among those who committed crimes. Despite widespread support for immigration reductions on the citizens’ panel, few people were willing to pay more in taxation to support enforced border and immigration controls.

Asylum seekers and refugees

There was much discussion in the stakeholder meeting about asylum dispersal to Bradford. The refugee charities at the meeting praised the welcome they had received from Bradford Council. “Bradford Council has been great, the council has been proud and clear about the work it has done, it’s been better than most other councils in Yorkshire.” (Representative of a refugee campaign group).

However, the local authority felt that they had no say in the G4S dispersal contract, and felt the city had taken far more dispersed asylum-seekers than other areas, because accommodation was cheaper in Bradford.

“Bradford’s generosity is spilling; it’s been pushed and stretched. And the
affordability of housing in Bradford has made it a very appealing composition for people to come and seek additional housing for asylum seekers which places additional pressures on the city that will reach a tipping point. We are a very welcoming city, we’re very proud of our history in accepting people fleeing violence and oppression. But there will come a point where there is a struggle to maintain that in light of the fact that we cannot afford it.” (Local authority representative).

There were criticisms of G4S asylum support contract by stakeholders in relation to the quality of accommodation. Council officials felt that a little more funding would help them provide a better resettlement service for asylum-seekers and refugees. Both the stakeholder meeting and the citizens’ panel felt that asylum-seekers should be allowed to work – council officials felt that Bradford lost the most skilled refugees after their asylum cases were determined.

While the stakeholder group were vocal about Bradford’s welcome to refugees, the citizens’ panel did not share these sentiments. There was a baseline commitment to helping refugees, but the citizens’ panel felt there were limits to the UK’s generosity, and a need to prioritise vulnerable UK citizens. While they associated the term refugee with desperation, war, and being in need of help, the group were not sympathetic to taking in more refugees, who were perceived as heavy users of benefits. The majority of the citizens’ panel wanted the numbers of asylum seekers and refugees to be reduced.

### Numbers

The majority of citizens’ panel group supported increases in highly-skilled migration both from inside and outside the EU and wanted the numbers of overseas students to remain the same. The majority of the panel wanted reductions to family migration and the numbers of asylum-seekers and refugees coming to the UK. Views about the numbers of low-skilled and seasonal workers from the EU were much more mixed, with about half of the group wanting numbers to remain about the same. Generally, there was support for migrants who were working and seen to be contributing through taxation.

### Impact of migration

The positive impact of immigration on the economy was voiced by the citizens’ panel, who praised the impact foreign workers had. But there were widespread concerns in the group about the strain immigration was having on public services, particularly the NHS. Panel members came up with ideas to manage the impacts of migration on the NHS, with suggestions including mandatory health insurance and a ‘deposit’ paid upfront on arrival.

Both the panel and the stakeholder meeting felt that remittance payments to migrants’ families abroad took money away from the local economy.

A number of participants in the stakeholder meeting felt that the
benefits of immigration were felt by those who were better off, and negative impacts were largely felt by those on low incomes and the vulnerable.

“So it’s a few people it’s impacting on, and often this is the poorest people, often in the inner city areas” (Educational professional).

This was echoed in the citizens’ panel, as participants spoke about negative impacts on immigration due to concentrated populations of newcomers, generally to poorer areas with fewer resources: “they always put them in one area”.

Integration

Both the citizens’ panel and the stakeholder meeting felt Bradford was given a bad press because people lived in different parts of the city, but some in the group felt that this was unfair, citing that people mixed at work and school, not just where they live. The difference between residential and institutional segregation was also noted in the stakeholder meeting.

This is not to say that residential segregation was not felt to be a significant issue. Panel members felt that such segregation hampered integration and contributed to negative public attitudes to immigration.

“I see Bradford as three concentric circles. The inner circle, where the Pakistanis and Indians came in the 1950s is where the eastern Europeans now live. The next circle is where Pakistanis and Indians move to when they get a bit richer, where they live alongside whites. Then the outer circle which is just white.” (Citizens’ panel participant).

There was a universal consensus that children were integrating well at school, and all the parents on the panel wanted their children to learn about other cultures.

“I’m a great grandmother. My great-grandson gets to celebrate Eid at school; he learns about other cultures and he brings pictures home about different festivals. If my dad was alive now and say this, he would say ‘why the heck are you doing this’. But things have changed now, attitudes are different.” (Citizens’ panel participant).

The panel came up with numerous examples of everyday integration, at work, in shared public space, at festivals such as Eid and at school. Eid celebrations were now part of the city’s shared heritage and enjoyed by all communities. “We’ve got Christmas lights, Eid lights and Diwali lights and lots and lots of food.” There was a strong civic pride in Bradford, which bridge divides and brings communities together.

Overall, schools were seen to have been successful in promoting integration. The stakeholder meeting praised the “linking schools” project connecting pupils in majority white schools to those with large minority ethnic populations.
Panel members considered integration to be a responsibility of the Government through its provision and management of services, and for migrants through learning English, respecting tolerance, as well as a responsibility of receiving communities who were considered by both groups to be equally responsible.

The citizens’ panel was asked to name one thing that would improve integration in Bradford, with a consensus that English language fluency and reducing housing segregation was important. There was a consensus that integration was a two-way process, with migrants and the ‘host’ community having responsibilities in this process: “[they should] learn about our culture and we should learn about theirs”. The Government also had responsibilities, for example to provide English language classes.

The stakeholder meeting was asked the same question. Greater local authority say in asylum dispersal was felt to be a policy change that would help integration. Other suggestions regarding what would better promote integration in Bradford included:

- Better regulation of private rental housing
- Tailored responses and recognise that communities are not homogenous
- Recognition of the importance of parks and attractive public space
- A conversation about fairness
- More funding for ESOL
- Better transport links and economic prosperity enjoyed by everyone
- Coordinated government policies that do not cut across each other.

**Points for consensus**

There were a number of points of agreement about the future direction of immigration policy among the citizens’ panel, with many of these views supported by the stakeholder meeting.

**Effective immigration control**

The Government needs to have more control over immigration and to be more competent at immigration enforcement.

Policy transparency There was felt to be a need for independent sources of facts about immigration. The citizens’ panel voiced feelings of being duped or lied to by the Government about who was permitted to enter the UK and in what numbers. Support for labour migration. The panel was happy for highly-skilled migration and did not resent working migrants who were contributing to the economy and paying taxes.

Contributory welfare: In order to use the NHS and receive benefits, migrants (and UK nationals) need to have paid in through taxation. Shared space: The opportunity to meet and mix with migrants at work,
school, through festivals and in other attractive, shared public space helps integration.

Responsibilities for integration: Migrants, host communities and the Government all have responsibilities to promote integration. Migrants need to learn English and observe British values and customs. Host communities need to be welcoming and prepared to open to each other.

Combating poverty: Poor quality housing, pressures on public services, unemployment, low pay and poor working conditions make integration more difficult to achieve and can contribute to resentment.
Appendix

Demographics of citizens’ panel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Ethnic Group</th>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>24 years</td>
<td>Service Support Manager - C1</td>
<td>White British</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Debt Advisor - C1</td>
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<td>Male</td>
<td>36 years</td>
<td>Gas Engineer - C2</td>
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<tr>
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<td>31 years</td>
<td>Engineer (Qualified) - B</td>
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<td>Joiner - C2</td>
<td>White British</td>
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<td>Female</td>
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<td>Female</td>
<td>43 years</td>
<td>Senior Credit Analyst - B</td>
<td>White British</td>
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Organisations Represented at stakeholder meeting

Bradford Chamber of Commerce
Bradford Council
COEMO
Faithful Neighbours (Diocese of Bradford)
InCommunities
JRCT
Migration Yorkshire
Office of Naz Shah MP
Regional Asylum Activism
Sharing Voices
Tim Parry and Jonathan Ball Foundation for Peace
Migrants Organise
Yorkshire Housing
About

British Future

British Future is an independent, non-partisan thinktank seeking to involve people in an open conversation which addresses people's hopes and fears about identity and integration, migration and opportunity, so that we feel confident about Britain's Future.

We want to ensure that we engage those who are anxious about cultural identity and economic opportunity in Britain today, as well as those who already feel confident about our society, so that we can together identify workable solutions to make Britain the country we want to live in.

HOPE not hate

HOPE not hate exists to provide a positive antidote to the politics of hate. We combine first class research with community organising and grassroots actions to defeat hate groups and to build community resilience against extremism.

Hate is often the consequence of a loss of hope and an articulation of despair, but given an alternative, especially one that understands and addresses their anger, most people will choose HOPE over hate. Our job is to expose and undermine groups that preach hate, intolerance and division whilst uniting communities around what they have in common.

We aim to take a part in building a society that celebrates rather than scapegoats our differences.