1. What does citizenship and civic engagement mean in the 21st century? Why does it matter, and how does it relate to questions of identity?

In today’s society, citizenship is about having the right and freedom to express one’s own culture and beliefs, as well as having responsibility to accept the right of others to express their views and values.

Civic engagement should involve communities working together to address public concerns and promote the communities quality of life.

2. Citizenship is partly about membership and belonging. Are there ways we could strengthen people’s identity as citizens, whether they are citizens by birth or naturalisation? Could citizenship ceremonies or events throughout the educational process play a role? Should pride in being or becoming British be encouraged?

Pride in being/becoming British should be encouraged, but so should a ‘sense of belonging’.

3. Civic engagement can be seen as both a responsibility and a right of citizenship. Beyond the existing legal framework, should citizens have additional formal rights and responsibilities? How do you see the relationship between the two? Should they have the force of law individually or be presented as reciprocal duties between citizen and state? How should they be monitored and/or enforced?

4. Do current laws encourage active political engagement? What are your views on changes to the franchise for national or local elections, including lowering the voting age? Should changes be made to the voting process or the voting registration process?

The current process is out dated in this digital age; voters should have more option as to how they vote with introduction of electronic voting.

Should the voting age be lowered, then political parties need to broaden their canvassing process to reach the younger generation as door knocking will not suffice with this age group.

Reducing the age to 16 may allow schools to encourage voter registration and assist pupils in doing so.

5. What should be the role of education in teaching and encouraging good citizenship? At what stages, from primary school through to university, should it be (a) available, and (b) compulsory? Should there be any exemptions? Should there be more emphasis on political participation, both inside and outside classes? How effective is current teaching? Do the curriculum and the qualifications that are currently offered need amending?

Encouraging ‘good citizenship’ is the responsibility of both home and school life. Teaching from an early age, sets in motion an idea that ‘good citizenship’ is part of normal everyday life. More emphasis should be given to politics both inside and outside the classroom.
Schools should be supported and encouraged to partake in more community focused activities to encourage greater understanding and engagement by children within their locality, in turn setting a foundation.

6. **Do voluntary citizenship programmes such as the National Citizen Service do a good job of creating active citizens? Are they the right length? Should they be compulsory, and if so, when? Should they include a greater political element? Should they lead to a more public citizenship ceremony? Are they good value for money? What other routes exist for creating active citizens?**

7. **How can society support civic engagement? What responsibility should central government, devolved and local governments, third sector organisations and the individual have for encouraging civic engagement? What can the Government and Parliament do to support civil society initiatives to increase civic engagement?**

Parish and Town Councils are the closest tier to communities, therefore perhaps more likely to achieve success in encouraging civic engagement. They are increasingly providing more services and should therefore receive the support from higher government in recognition. They are well placed for creating a sense of belonging by the inclusion of residents within local projects to improve their locality and therefore create a sense of inclusion and pride amongst individuals. Parish and Town Councils are more aware of hard to reach groups, local needs and organisations and are well placed for bringing a community together.

8. **What are the values that all of us who live in Britain should share and support? Can you identify any threats to these values, which affect the citizenship of, for instance, women or various minority groups? If so, how can their citizenship be strengthened?**

Values should comprise of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect for and tolerance of other faiths and beliefs.

Threats include extremism and intolerance.

All citizens should have equal opportunity irrelevant of gender, race, faith or belief.

9. **Why do so many communities and groups feel “left behind”? Are there any specific factors which act as barriers to active citizenship faced by different communities or groups - white, BME, young, old, rural, urban? How might these barriers be overcome?**

10. **How do you see the relationship between citizenship and civic engagement on the one hand and social cohesion and integration on the other? What effect does the level of diversity in schools and workplaces have on integration in society as a whole? How can diversity and integration be increased concurrently?**

11. **How important are levels of English proficiency for first and second generation immigrants and what could be done to increase them, including through support for ESOL classes? Are there particular barriers faced by newcomers to Britain? Could the naturalisation process, including the citizenship test, be improved and if so, how?**
Being proficient should allow easier integration and remove a sense of exclusion on both sides of any language barrier.

12. Can you give examples of initiatives and role models that have helped promote a positive vision of British Citizenship within a tolerant and cohesive society?

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