There are two aspects to this consultation: those born in this country being good citizens, and those born elsewhere becoming British citizens, as well as good citizens.

Citizenship ceremonies should be encouraged and celebrated; small administrative costs are acceptable, but costs should not be so high that they prevent applications.

Citizenship ceremonies should be publicised in local papers and magazines so that communities were more aware of them.

Experience elsewhere eg Germany has demonstrated that community groups working alongside people newly arrived in a country can help the integration process.

Some schemes developed with the best of intentions are in reality bureaucratic and completely unworkable and so fail at the first fence eg the Full Community Sponsorship scheme for integrating refugees, supposedly a way that community groups could be involved in supporting the resettlement of vulnerable people fleeing conflict.

All people should be treated as equal but the systems we have in this country do not treat all people in the same way. They favour particular groups but ignore others.

People are not moved by talk of global citizenship, they identify with local communities – how things affect them directly.

Schools already teach citizenship but this should be expanded to improve pupils understanding of their own democratic systems.

While voting by electronic means at a polling station to facilitate the count would be acceptable, the view is that there are already too many problems and opportunities for fraud with the current system for postal and proxy votes; members are not in favour of on-line voting.

Members are not in favour of lowering the voting age to 16.

Louise Ashmore
County Officer

6 September 2017