

Leicestershire Equalities Challenge Group

Notes of the Hybrid Meeting NSPCC Centre, Leicester Friday 26th January 2024 10.30am – 12.30pm

Attendees

Liz Blackshaw - Chair	Action on Infant Feeding
Peter Lewis - Vice Chair	Equality Action, Loughborough
Alison Adams	Diocese of Leicester
Anne Lawrence	Leicestershire Deaf Association
Cath Bayley	VISTA
Dr Iris Lightfoote	Race Equality Centre
Lucy Smith	Older People via Blaby Arts
Tad Stenzel	Polish Community, Melton Mowbray

Apologies

Anne Glasper	Shepshed Foodbank
Anthony Marvin	Leicestershire & Rutland, Youth Family Service
Cllr Mrs Pam Posnett	LCC Cabinet Lead
Dr Lyn Williams	Nursing
Jill Vincent	Charnwood Arts
Leela Damodaran	Digital Technologies & Social Inclusion CIC
Mathew Hulbert - Vice Chair	True Colours LGBT Events
Mina Rogers	Older Peoples Engagement Network
Pam Sly	Leicestershire Deaf Association
Resham Singh	Interfaith Forum/Sikh Welfare

Presenters

Justine Roberts	Headteacher Oakfield Short Stay Primary School and Interim Head of SEND Service
Richard Newing	Interim Team Manager, LCC Highways and Transport

Guests

Robert Martin	SEND Hub, Parent Carer Forum
Sarah Ball	SEND Hub, Parent Carer Forum

Support Officers

Barry Daws	BSL Interpreter
Avril Dobson	BSL Interpreter
Zafar Saleem	LCC Head of Communities, Chief Exec's Dept
Dr Joshua Mawere	LCC Policy Officer, Equalities
Carine Cardoza	LECC Policy Support Officer

1. Notes

a. Welcome and Introductions

Liz Blackshaw welcomed members, guests, presenters, and LCC officers to the LECG meeting held at the NSPCC Centre.

b. Notes of the previous meeting: 10th November 2023

[The notes of the 10th of November 2023](#) were passed as an accurate record.

2. Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND)

The chair welcomed Justine Roberts, headteacher Oakfield Short Stay Primary School and Interim Head of the SEND Service, who provided an update on LCC's SEND service.

Justine outlined the way parents, carers, schools and LCC had helped shaped the SEND and Inclusion improvements that had a focus on 3 areas: improving SENA (Special Educational Needs Assessment and Commissioning Service), supporting schools, and supporting SEND and Inclusion services.

She said resetting SENA was to ensure that LCC understands the needs of children and young people and their families and makes transparent, needs-based decisions with timely and clear communication.

The focus of supporting schools was to support the development of an inclusive system that ensures that every child or young person with SEND has the right support at the right time, and those involved in delivering this support feel their voice is heard and know what is expected of them.

Regarding the SEND Provision in Leicestershire (SPIL), she said LCC had developed a guide and directory of Leicestershire specialist provisions and links to mainstream settings for parents/carers to consult when making parental preference choices; co-produced with the Leicestershire SEND Hub. It is now available on:

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs-and-disability/education-and-childcare/send-support-in-schools/send-provision-in-leicestershire-spil>

LECG members raised following points in the discussion:

- LECG is interested in equality for all children in Leicestershire, but SEND Children are the most vulnerable, they have no voice, often they are let down at the earliest level and their parents/carers have additional needs that are not being met
- The Change Programme Partnership Plan is a pilot scheme, it is currently being trialled and after testing and discussions with the DFE, it will be implemented in 2025
- LECG acknowledges the budget challenges and funding cuts that are being faced by local government and said that this makes it more important that LCC makes the right decisions at the right time without parents/carers having to go to tribunals
- There is a shortage of specialist schools in the county and currently children from Leicester City are being placed in county schools thus decreasing school spaces for county children. However, this is a national problem and currently some county children are being placed in schools in Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, and Warwickshire
- More work needs to be done with parents/carers to co-produce policies and services so that county provision is right and meets the needs of local SEND children
- There is a lack of capital funding in specialist SEND schools and an over reliance on provision in the independent sector, this is a local and national problem
- LCC communication to parents/carers needs improving.

The chair thanked Justine for providing the update and said LECG members shared her passion to improve the life of SEND children and their parents/carers.

Follow up Action

Justine to return to LECG to keep members informed of progress made on LCC's SEND service

3. Consultation results on LCC's Street Lighting Proposals

The chair welcomed Richard Newing, the interim team manager in LCC's Highways & Transport department. Richard reported on the summary results on the public consultation undertaken between July and August 2023 regarding the dimming of streetlights in the county. Following the consultation, LCC's Cabinet at their December 2023 meeting approved a trial dimming of streetlights to 30% intensity from 8pm for an 18-month live trial period. There will be on going monthly reporting on enquiries, actions taken, lessons learned, etc., to senior management and lead council members. Richard gave a breakdown of the consultation results by district, age, gender, ethnicity, religion, and disability.

Details can be found by clicking on this link for [the consultation results](#)

A discussion followed and points raised were:

- Regarding respondents to the consultation, it was noted that ethnicity data was overwhelming White. Concerns were raised regarding implication of not getting data from other community groups. Acknowledged that pace of demographic change across county was significant i.e., Oadby & Wigston, but LCC needs to make more effort to contact/engage with other community groups, preferably face to face
- Discussions/conversations on data comparisons should stick to main characteristics and not mix religion with ethnicity
- Concerns raised that most of street lighting consultation was online or through social media. LCC needs to be mindful that not everyone, particularly older people and those with vision impairments engage through digital means
- More data evidence required to show impacts of reducing street lighting and levels of crime/fear of crime/personal safety
- LCC need to improve communications on how members of public, particularly those with visual impairment, can apply for reflective lighting
- Need to share consultation results and cabinet report with community safety partnerships
- Noted that night vision for older people reduces with age so LCC needs to monitor data of car accidents and the age of drivers
- LCC needs to connect with car manufacturers, RAC, etc., regarding new cars having automatic use of high beams in areas of low street lighting as this causes issues for other drivers on the road.

The chair thanked Richard for the presentation, for acknowledging the input previously made by LECG members and welcomed a further update on results of the trial later in the year.

Follow up action

Richard to provide a verbal or written update in 6 months' time.

4. Analysis Report of LCC Consultations Considered by LECG

The report provided an overview of LCC consultations that had been considered by LECG members during 2023, a summary of key findings, and on how LECG's feedback had been used to shape reports.

Follow up action

LECG to use the report to promote its work programme to new members, community groups and organisations.

5. Any Other Business

Dr Joshua Mawere

The Chair welcomed Joshua, the new LCC Policy Officer for Equalities. Joshua said his current work focused on supporting departments with their equality impact assessments and on developing the consultation plan for the LCC Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion strategy, 2024-2028.

Accessibility of Information

Cath Bayley informed that Vista and the Deaf Association were working with University Hospitals Leicester to improve their accessibility standards so that communications/information to patients could be produced in preferred BSL and visual formats, different languages, supported with interpretation services, etc.

Barry Daws

The Chair thanked Barry for providing BSL interpretation service to LECG for many years and wished him well for his retirement.

Date of 2024 Meetings

Meetings will be 'in person' at the NSPCC Centre, Leicester, LE4 1EZ.

- Wednesday 27th March 2024 (LECG AGM)
- Friday 24th May 2024
- Wednesday 31st July 2024
- Friday 27th September 2024
- Wednesday 27th Nov 2024
- Friday 31st January 2025