

**Leicestershire Equalities Challenge Group
Notes of AGM Hybrid Meeting
NSPCC Centre, Leicester
Friday 27th March 2024
10.30am – 12.30pm**

Attendees**LECG Members**

Liz Blackshaw - Chair	Action on Infant Feeding
Mathew Hulbert - Vice Chair	True Colours LBGT Events
Peter Lewis - Vice Chair	Equality Action, Loughborough
Councillor Mrs Posnett	LCC Cabinet Member
Alison Adams	Diocese of Leicester
Cath Bayley	VISTA
David Featonby	United Reformed Church
Dr Iris Lightfoote	Race Equality Centre
Dr Lyn Williams	Nursing
Lucy Smith	Older People via Blaby Arts
Resham Singh	Interfaith Forum/Sikh Welfare
Tad Stenzel	Polish Community, Melton Mowbray

Apologies

Anne Glasper	Shepshed Foodbank
Anne Lawrence	Leicestershire Deaf Association
Anthony Marvin	Leicestershire & Rutland, Youth Family Service
Jill Vincent	Charnwood Arts
Leela Damodaran	Digital Technologies & Social Inclusion CIC
Mina Rogers	Older Peoples Engagement Network
Pam Sly	Leicestershire Deaf Association

Presenters

Councillor Mrs Taylor	LCC Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member
Nick Wash	LCC Head of Service, Finance
Mandeep Sandhu Gritton	LCC Service Manager, Children's Services
Koby Davis	LCC Personal Care Advisor

Support Officers

Zafar Saleem	LCC Head of Communities, Chief Exec's Dept
Carine Cardoza	LECC Policy Support Officer

1. Notes**a. Welcome and Introductions**

Liz Blackshaw welcomed members, presenters, and LCC officers to the LECG meeting.

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

The notes of the 26th of March 2024 were passed as an accurate record.

c. Update on Members

The chair welcomed new member, David Featonby, and informed that Jill Vincent will be standing down as a member. The chair thanked Jill for her valued contribution and attendance to the LECG meetings. Members agreed that Jill will be missed.

2. Elections of LECG Chair & Vice Chair

Members voted not to have co vice chairs but a single vice chair.

Members voted for Liz Blackshaw to be the chair and Peter Lewis to be vice chair.

3. LCC Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 - 2027/28

The chair welcomed Nick Wash, LCC Head of Service, Finance. Nick did a presentation on the impact of the challenges on LCC budget. He outlined the national financial position, gave an update on LCC's current budget status, the 4-year budget proposals, the financial controls on recruitment, procurement and other spend to reduce the budget gap and finally, he went through the next steps in terms of expenditure, new savings, dialogue with Government, policy changes, etc.

A discussion followed and centred around:

- Growing demand on LCC's SEND and Inclusion Service
- Changes in demographics across Leicestershire, particularly regarding an aging population
- Increase in council tax
- Impact of the budget cuts on the voluntary sector
- Impact on LCC staff
- Communications about the budget to residents – LECG requested less reliance on digital means and for LCC to do more face-to-face consultations/engagements, organise focus group meetings, etc.

The chair thanked Nick for the presentation and asked members to use this link to view papers for County Council budget meeting:

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=134&MId=7305&Ver=4> - Item 7

Follow up action

LECG members to contact Nick if they want to provide further views.

4. Presentation on LCC's Care Leavers

The chair welcomed Councillor Mrs Taylor, Mandeep Sandhu Gritton and Koby Davis, who provided a brief on LCC's vote in February 2024 to treat care experience as a protected characteristic under the Equalities Act.

LCC has become the 81st local authority in the country to recognise care experience as a protected characteristic, giving care leavers greater protection from discrimination, and follows Blaby District Council and Oadby and Wigston Borough Council in taking this step in Leicestershire. Koby gave an inspiring 'real life' insight into the challenges faced by young care leavers such as himself and the support that he provides as a personal advisor to other care leavers.

A discussion then followed and covered:

- Raising the equalities status of care leavers with other protected characteristic groups and mainstreaming across LCC service plans and reports, whilst noting the legal complexities
- Role of advocates for care leavers – social workers, personal advisors, and independent visitors.
- Life skills programmes to assist care leavers to transition to independent living – budgeting, housing, employment, etc.
- Intergenerational conferences that had been held previously in the county that brought young people and older people together to increase awareness and discuss common issues faced by them.

The chair thanked Koby, Councillor Mrs Taylor, and Mandeep for attending the LECG meeting and for highlighting the challenges faced by vulnerable young care leavers across the county.

Follow up action

Mandeep to provide a demographic summary of care leavers in Leicestershire (last 6 months) on ethnicity, gender, age group, educational attainment, health, SEN, and/or any other info that could easily be extracted from LCC data.

5. Any Other Business

Date of 2024 Meetings

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

- Friday 24th May 2024
- Wednesday 31st July 2024
- Friday 27th September 2024
- Wednesday 27th Nov 2024
- Friday 31st January 2025