

Meet the Councillor

People with learning difficulties
questioning Leeds MPs



23rd November 2022



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Introduction



Connect in the North and Asking You planned and ran 2 events for UK Parliament Week.

We wanted to encourage people with learning difficulties to get involved in local politics and share their issues.

The first session was held at St Georges Centre on Friday 11th December. The session was for people with learning difficulties and family carers. They learnt about the difference between local and national politics. The group wrote questions for councillors.

The second session was on Friday 18th November in the Council Chamber. The event was an opportunity to learn more about the role of a Councillor, share issues and meet Councillors.

We invited all the Leeds City Councillors. 12 Councillors were able to attend.

The Councillors Who Came



Name	Ward and Party
Cllr. Barry Anderson	Conservative Councillor Adel & Wharfedale Ward Adel and Wharfedale Chair of Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities)
Cllr. Kayleigh Brooks	Labour Councillor Deputy Executive Member Little London and Woodhouse Deputy Executive Member
Cllr. Ed Carlisle	Green Party Councillor Hunslet and Riverside
Cllr. Lou Cunningham	Labour Councillor Armley
Cllr. Wayne Dixon	Social Democratic party Councillor Middleton Park
Cllr. James Gibson	Labour Councillor Cross Gates and Whinmoor ward Chair Licensing
Cllr. David Jenkins	Labour Councillor

	Killingbeck and Seacroft Deputy Executive Member
Cllr. Asghar Khan	Labour Councillor Burmantofts & Richmond Hill Deputy Executive Member to the Leader of the Council and for Communities
Cllr. Jessica Lennox	Labour Councillor Cross Gates and Whinmoor Ward Councillor Chief Whip
Cllr. Abigail Marshall Katung	Labour and Co-operative Party Councillor Little London, City Centre & Woodhouse Ward Chair Scrutiny Board for Adults, Health and Active Lifestyle Lead Member Faith and Religion Chair Hate Crime Strategic Board
Cllr. Karen Renshaw	Labour and Co-operative Party Councillor Ward: Ardsley and Robin Hood
Cllr. Kevin Ritchie	Labour Councillor Bramley and Stanningley Ward Disability Champion

Getting Ready for UK Parliament Week

Over 30 people came. Most of the people who came were people with learning difficulties and family carers.

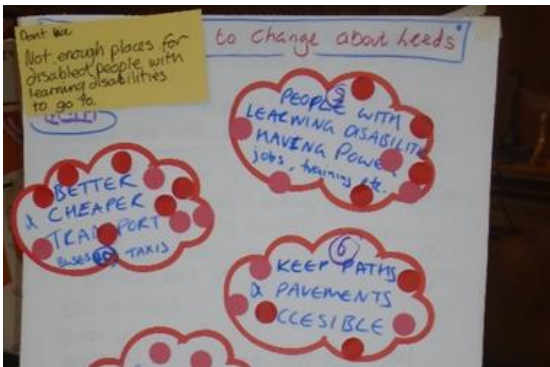


Sarah Wheatley from Connect in the North welcomed everyone and asked people to introduce themselves.

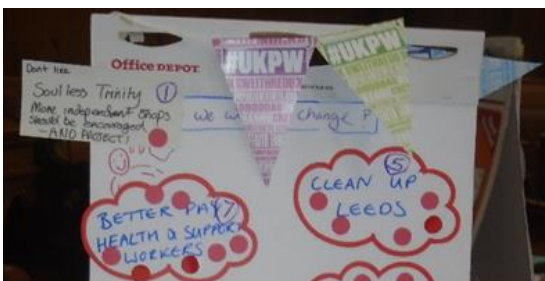
Everyone said their name and where they lived in Leeds.



Sarah ran training about the difference between the role of the Council and the role of National Government.



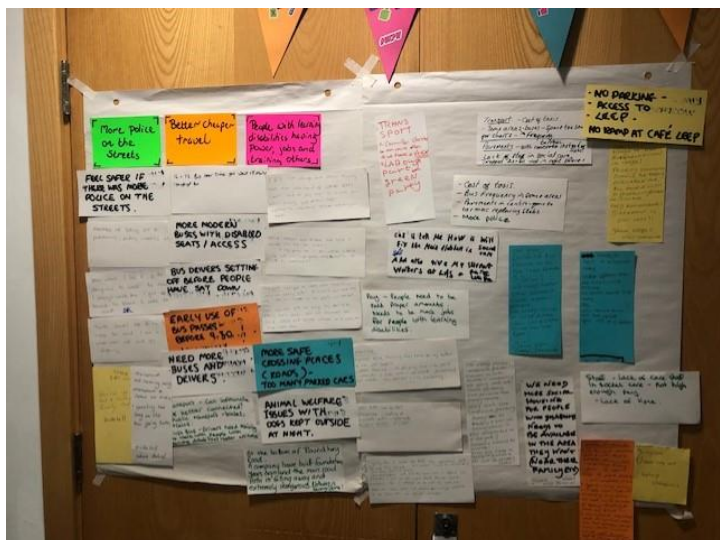
The themes from last year's UK Parliament week were introduced. Last year the group said transport, employment and being safe would make their lives better.



Everyone talked about the themes in groups. People shared what their issues were.

People were given cards to write down questions for Councillors.

The Questions



People with learning difficulties and family carers wrote lots of questions.

There were too many to ask at the event. Some of the questions were for Councillors who couldn't come to the event.


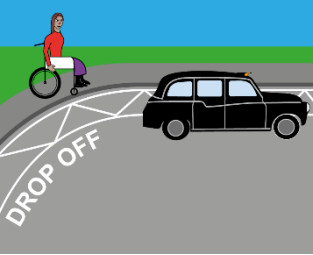


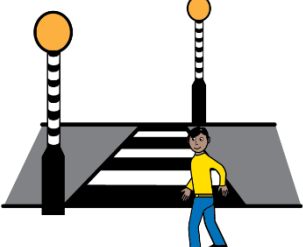




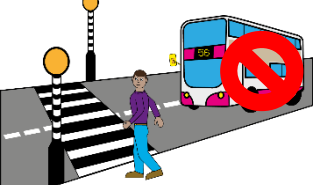
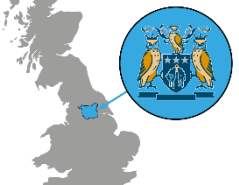
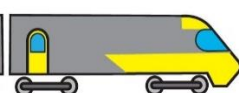
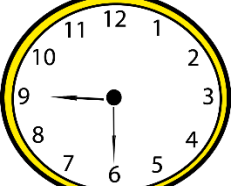
We decided to share them at the People's Parliament.

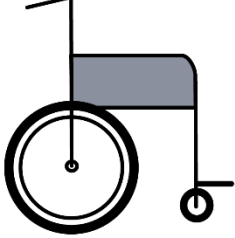

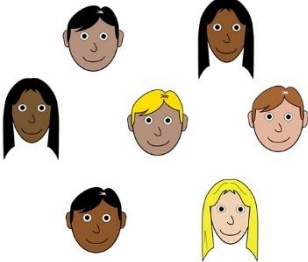

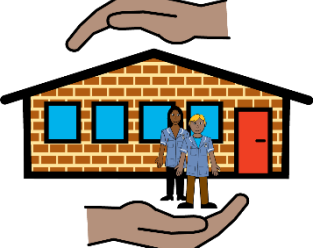

They were also sent to all the Councillors before the Meet the Councillor event.



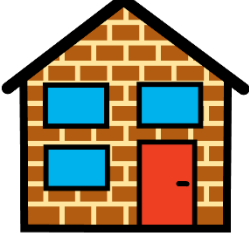


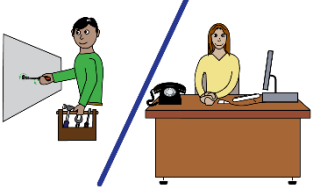
The questions will be sent to Metro, the Travel Task Group and West Yorkshire Police.

The Questions Sent to Councillors

	Can something be done about escooters and ebikes using canal paths and parks?
	How do we get a dropped curb put in near LEEP 1? It is really hard getting out of a car or taxi using my wheelchair. This will be a problem for other people going to LEEP 1 too.

	<p>How do we get crossings put in? I'm scared to cross the road where I live because there isn't a crossing.</p>
	<p>What can be done about motorbikes being driven dangerously and pulling wheelies?</p>
	<p>What can we do to make the cost of taxis fairer? They cost a lot more for wheelchair users and we need to use them more often than none disabled people.</p>
	<p>Leeds City Council Transport is arriving very early or very late. Sometimes it cancels. We spend a long time getting home</p>
	<p>What can be done about cycle lanes and bus stops? It can be dangerous getting off a bus if you have to step straight into a cycle lane.</p>
	<p>What can we do about the shortage of bus drivers? Recently there have been lots of buses cancelling.</p>
	<p>Can Lofthouse and places on the outskirts of Leeds have more regular buses?</p>
	<p>Are there any plans for a trolley bus scheme or tram in Leeds?</p>
	<p>We want bus Passes to be used before 9:30</p>

	<p>Can anything be done about most buses not having wheelchair spaces big enough for powered wheelchairs.</p>
	<p>How can we fix the main problem in social care? There's a huge problem getting and keeping staff because they are not paid enough.</p>
	<p>There are not enough PAs from minority ethnic communities. We need more understanding about our cultural needs. Leeds needs to pay more to recruit from ethnic minorities and retain staff. Its important staff understand cultural and religious needs.</p>
	<p>We need more learning disability nurses in our area. We only have one which is shared out among any areas.</p>
	<p>Supported Living running with 1 night staff. What if someone has a seizure? The staff could be accused of abusing. Night staff only being paid £10.80</p>
	<p>When I'm going in for a major operation my brothers are going to be put into respite in a different place to where they usually go. This is going to cause them great distress which will make me stressed when I should be recovering.</p>

	<p>Priority Housing should be readily available for all people with a disability. Different is not less</p>
	<p>I cannot find housing near my home for my brothers (who have learning disabilities) to live near me with support. Bidding is all online. There's no one to help if something is filled in wrong. It's very stressful and time consuming. Who can help me?</p>
	<p>No housing for disabled people. I was told I need to make my daughter homeless. She has Autism and Epilepsy. I've been bidding for 3 years. No supported living, no private property, no council properties in area, what else can I do?</p>
	<p>I'd feel safer if there were more police on the streets</p>
	<p>At the bottom of Roundhay Road a company has built foundations years ago and the main path is falling away and is extremely dangerous. Nothing is being done.</p>
	<p>There needs to be more jobs for people with learning disabilities</p> <p>How many people with disabilities does the Council employ? Can the council employ people with learning disabilities to deliver training and awareness?</p> <p>Can the council employ people to deliver hate and mate training in schools? We would like good jobs and long-term secure employment.</p>

Meet the Councillor



Councillor Kevin Ritchie welcomed everyone to the Council Chambers.

Em Pearson did Housekeeping for the meeting.

Over 30 people came.



Councillor Kevin Ritchie shared what a Councillor does.

It was very interesting.

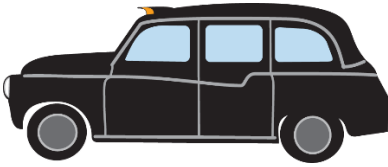


All the Councillors introduced themselves.



Councillor Kevin Ritchie invited everyone to ask their questions.

Taxis



Anne Marie shared the issue with taxis costing more when you use an accessible taxi.

She shared some very bad experiences she's had using taxis.

Councillor James Gibson chairs the Licencing Committee. He said people should report bad experiences.



Councillor Gibson explained that Hackney Cabs are licenced differently to other taxis. The Council set the rate for Hackney Cabs, and they are regulated by an operator. Other taxis such as Uber can charge what they like.

There are problems getting and keeping drivers at the moment. A lot of drivers don't want to do journeys where they must travel to the other side of the city because of the high cost of fuel.

Support



Michael asked how we could solve the care crisis.



Councillor Jessica Lennox explained that 70% of the council budget is spent on Social Care. If Leeds City Council don't balance the budget it will be taken over by London.

There is not enough money to pay good wages and have enough staff. Leeds City Council puts pressure on the government to give them more money.



Councillor David Jenkins said that Brexit has meant that we have a gap of 100 000 workers. We need more international workers.

Support Bills



Michael asked about the large amount of money people must pay towards their support bills.



Councillor David Jenkins said that the rates were set by National Government.



Councillor Wayne Dixon said that the Social Democratic party want to have a National Care Company which works a bit like the NHS.



Councillor Ed Carlisle said the Green Party is also looking at National Care

Staff from Minority Ethnic Communities

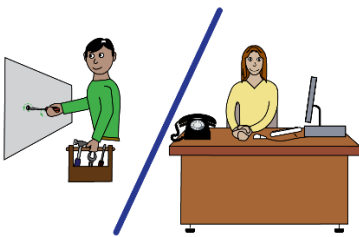


Kausar asked about the lack of support workers from minority ethnic communities.



Councillor Asghar Khan said that we need funding to go into the community and talk to people about working in social care.

Paid Work



Councillors were asked what they were doing about helping more people with learning difficulties get paid work.



Councillor Jessica Lennox said the council have made changes to the way they recruit people to remove some of the barriers. They are working with the large organisations in the city to employ people. St James' Hospital successfully employed local people by going to community centres and places of worship in the area.

Housing



A few people talked about the lack of housing and the difficulty of getting somewhere to live near their families.



Councillor Kayleigh Brooks said that there is a housing issue because 600 houses are sold each year as part of the Right to Buy Scheme. We are not building enough houses to cover this.

Buses



Tauseef said there was an issue with bus drivers not letting him get on the bus because people were sat in the wheelchair spaces.



Councillor Hames Gibson said it is important to report things within 24 hours. The CCTV gets deleted after that.

Crossings



Janet said that she was scared to cross the road where she lives. A child got knocked down crossing the road near her.



Councillor Lou Cunningham said she knew about the road. They are working to get a crossing put in. They are working with the West Yorkshire Police and Highways. They are doing a survey of the road.



Councillor Kevin Ritchie closed the meeting.

Everyone had a chance to talk to the Councillors after the event.

Most people shared their contact details with their Councillor.

Watch the Meet the Councillors Event

Watch the event on YouTube with Vicky Cherry Hiles.



<https://youtu.be/bQ3AKJ1XG5g>

Thank you to all the people who took part in the event and the Councillors who couldn't be there on the day but have been involved.

Get In Touch

Connect in the North

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	<p>Twitter</p>	<p>@ConnectintNorth</p>



Asking You

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