

**Notes of the Scrutiny: LIGHTBULB TASK & FINISH GROUP meeting held on MONDAY, 24 NOVEMBER 2025 in the Brooks Room - Council Offices, Narborough**

**Attendees:-**

**Members:-**

Cllr. Neil Wright (Chairman)

Cllr. Nick Brown

Cllr. Susan Findlay

Cllr. Mark Jackson

Cllr. Roger Stead

**Officers:-**

Caroline Harbour - Environmental Health, Housing & Community Services Group Manager

Shanice Senghor - Housing Enablement Service Manager

Charlotte Christie-Smith - Assisted Technology Project Manager

Avisa Birchenough - Democratic & Scrutiny Services Officer

**Apologies:-**

Cllr. Roy Denney, Cllr. Janet Forey, Cllr. Dillan Shikotra, Cllr. Matt Tomeo and Cllr. Jane Wolfe

## 1. **PRESENTATION: LIGHTBULB**

The Chairman, Cllr. Neil Wright welcomed Members to the meeting and the Environmental Health, Housing & Community Service Manager and the Housing Enablement Service Manager, who were invited to make a presentation to Members on Lightbulb. The presentation covered the following points: -

- What Lightbulb Is, Why It Exists and How It Was Created.
  - Lightbulb is Leicestershire's integrated housing support model, bringing together housing, health and social care into one consistent system with a single point of access. It delivers Disabled Facilities Grants, Housing MOTs, Hospital discharge support, home gadgets and assistive technology, hoarding interventions, complex casework and prevention programmes. Lightbulb was created as the pre-2016 system was fragmented and residents were being passed between agencies, assessments were duplicated, waiting times were inconsistent, and the link between poor housing and health outcomes was not being addressed. All district and borough councils, County Council, NHS and Public Health collectively agreed to design a unified model with one assessment, one process and shared governance. A central hub in Blaby, as host authority, manages performance, reporting, governance, business support and partnership coordination. Locality teams in each district deliver the day-to-day housing support and DFGs.
  - DFG – Disabled Facilities Grant - The DFG model is the foundation of Lightbulb's integrated approach. What DFG is and the purpose.
    - DFG may only fund adaptations that are essential for safety, mobility and daily living not general improvements. Three statutory tests-
      - Necessary and Appropriate: an Occupational Therapist must assess the individual and confirm the adaptation is needed to meet their clinical or functional needs.
      - Reasonable and Practicable: the district council must confirm the adaptation can physically be delivered in that specific property.
      - Means Testing: adults are subject to a national means test, while children are exempt.
  - The maximum mandatory grant is thirty thousand pounds, but costs vary widely depending on complexity.
  - DFGs are proven to prevent hospital admissions, reduce falls,

reduce care packages, and delay or prevent residential care.

- What DFG Can Fund and the Process
  - DFG can fund basic home alterations that meet disability related needs.
  - Process – Referral, Occupational Therapy assessment, Technical survey and specification, Quotations, Approval, Work, Final Sign off.
- 12-Month Performance Overview
  - In 2024–2025, Lightbulb received 553 DFG referrals across Leicestershire, with 127 being for Blaby residents.
  - 222 completed across the county.
  - 18 Home Support Grants delivered.
  - 15 Hospital Discharge Grants were delivered.
  - 2539 Housing MOTs were completed.
- Performance and Demand - Lightbulb is performing better than the national picture but are continuing to work towards reducing the delivery times. Demand pressures remain high due to an ageing population, increasing frailty, complex clinical needs, and poor housing conditions that impact health, including respiratory illness. The current Housing MOT wait is around 22 days, and this remains a central part of the prevention model. 97% of customers said Lightbulb achieved what they needed, with clear improvements in quality of life, safety, confidence and home warmth.
  - Blaby's end-to-end delivery time for DFGs is 210 days.
  - The Lightbulb-wide average is 220 days.
  - The best practice national benchmark is 155 days
  - The national average is 247 days.
- Pilots: Home Gadgets and Safe Spaces, Housing and Respiratory Illness, and the Caseworker Pilot - These pilots are part of Lightbulb's ongoing development and shows adaptation to system pressures.
  - The Home Gadgets Pilot provides low-cost assistive devices such as dementia clocks; sensor plugs and telecare equipment to improve safety and independence.
    - Success is measured through reduced falls, improved confidence, reduced carer strain and fewer emergency escalations.
  - The Safe Spaces Pilot supports residents affected by hoarding or unsafe living environments, delivered through a trauma-informed, sensitive approach.
    - Success is measured through tenancy sustainment, reduced fire risks, improved safety and re-engagement with support services.

- The Housing and Respiratory Illness Pilot identifies and tackles damp, mould and cold conditions that contribute to respiratory illness.
  - Success is measured through reductions in GP and A&E attendance, improvements in breathing outcomes, and improvements in property condition.
- The Caseworker Pilot provides a single point of contact from referral to completion for complex cases. This reduces handoffs, improves communication, speeds up the process and improves customer experience.
  - Success is measured through the reduction in the overall turnover time of cases, from referral to work being carried out to completion.
- Financial Case
  - Lightbulb's funding model is agreed across all partners and is set out in the Business Case. Leicestershire County Council contributes 46% of total costs to reflect its statutory responsibilities and the savings Lightbulb produces for adult social care and health. The remaining 54% is split across district and borough councils based on historical demand, population and previous contribution levels. The agreed contributions are:
    - 24% Charnwood
    - 17% Hinckley and Bosworth
    - 14% North West Leicestershire
    - 14% Blaby
    - 14% Harborough
    - 9% Oadby and Wigston
    - 8% Melton

These percentages apply to both the central hub and locality delivery costs. As host authority, Blaby provides the corporate infrastructure for Lightbulb, including HR, Finance, ICT and management oversight. These overheads total £113,300 for 2025-26 and are fully recovered from partners. This ensures the host authority does not subsidise the partnership.

- Key Challenges and Risks - Members asked about key challenges and risks. These include:
  - Rising demand and increasing complexity of cases.
  - Limited contractor capacity and rising material costs.
  - Older and unsuitable housing stock that can limit what adaptations are practicable.
  - Dependencies with NHS and Adult Social Care pathways that influence the urgency and timing of adaptations.
  - Financial pressures across all partners.
  - The temporary pause on full DFG team integration due to Local Government Reorganisation.

Despite these challenges, Lightbulb performs better than the national average and delivers strong customer outcomes.

- Next Steps
  - The future priorities are:
    - Reducing delivery times towards the 155 day best-practice benchmark.
    - Embedding learning from our pilots.
    - Strengthening contractor capacity.
    - Improving triage and case management.
    - Expanding prevention through Housing MOTs.
    - Maintaining strong governance.
    - Securing a further 24-month extension for stability.
    - Preparing for Local Government Reorganisation.

The overall aim remains to maintain and improve a fully integrated, consistent, countywide model that delivers independence, safety and improved health outcomes while reducing demand pressures on health and social care partners.

Officers presented the 5-year business case created to support the success of the Lightbulb service including the pilot schemes ran in the past 12 months and how they are helping to create useable data to identify future steps. The 5-year plan was also put in place to support the need for staff retention to drive the scheme. Officers informed Members about the service's success in general and the standardisation of the service for all authorities and partners creating a "one offer".

All involved authorities and partners had jointly agreed the pilots in December 2024, the week these were due to be signed off, was the week LGR was announced, no authorities signed up. Some projects have been changed from the original planned 12 months to 24 months to mitigate staff retention for those pilots and to keep the Lightbulb service moving forward the Lightbulb service forward.

Members enquired if the Lightbulb costs/expenditures would appear in the upcoming budget as they did last year. Officers responded there is no answer to this yet as the data is not accurate. The spend can vary and there are statutory spends for children which is not measured, however the full budget for this current year will be used. Members queried when LGR happens, will the historic data issue be resolved, to which Officers responded, that they believed this to be the case. Leicester City Council was not included in the presentation, Officers clarified city are a unitary and are not included in this initiative.

Members asked about raising awareness for the service, which the Officers felt is not currently required as the take up and referrals speak for themselves. Although currently there are 5 or 6 different models across England, other authorities are trying to duplicate our Lightbulb service as its seen to be impactful.

Officers talked about how the volume and types of referrals vary between the different authorities. BDC and Harborough Councils do not have a high referral figure for respiratory conditions, mainly because those authorities do not double as "Landlords" to the patient/tenant, unlike authorities who own

their own housing stock and refer their tenant/patients.

Members asked about the benchmarking, Officers described how 12 months ago that wasn't possible, however the business case has driven the data from the pilots. We can already see we are ahead of the national average turnaround. The Caseworker Pilot directly feeds into this. By having the caseworker take the lead in contacting patients, it has given clarity to the process for patients, cutting down the time between follow up contact with the patients after the home MOT carried out and agreed work to begin.

Members overall were pleased with the direction the service is going in and felt more awareness needs to be brought to this service in general. Members felt Parish councils would benefit from receiving regular updates as they would be able to feed the information out to the communities.

## **2. ANY OTHER ACTIONS FOR SCRUTINY**

Actions for Next Meeting

- A brief initially for the Scrutiny Commissioners to understand how the new Renters Rights bill will impact this service for residents who require Lightbulb support, but do not own their own properties. To also be rolled out to all Members
- Update on the 2 year extension of the pilot schemes
- Noted – the concerns of the Officers employed in the pilot schemes for 12/24 months are receiving all entitlements ie pension and entitlements linked to length of service etc.

**THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 6.36 P.M.**