

Blaby District Council

Cabinet Executive

Date of Meeting	23 February 2025
Title of Report	24-month Extension to Lightbulb agreement This is a Key Decision and is on the Forward Plan.
Lead Member	Cllr. Les Phillimore - Housing, Community Safety and Environmental Services
Report Author	Lightbulb Service Manager
Strategic Themes	Enabling our communities and supporting our vulnerable residents

1. What is this report about?

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet approval for the proposed extension to the Lightbulb agreement across all partners for a further 24-month period until 31st March 2028.
- 1.2 To seek Cabinet approval for Blaby District Council to continue to host the Lightbulb Partnership on behalf of the other Districts within Leicestershire, for a further 24 months.

2. Recommendation(s) to Cabinet Executive

- 2.1 To extend the Lightbulb agreement for a further 24 months.
- 2.2 That the current contracts with the other Leicestershire Authorities are extended two years, whilst further work is undertaken to review the delivery model and pilots.
- 2.3 To note the cost of delivering the Lightbulb Service, as set out in paragraph 6 of the report for 2025 – 2026.
- 2.4 That delegated authority is given to the Environmental Health, Housing & Community Services Group Manager in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to monitor progress, review delivery methods and make minor necessary changes to ensure effective delivery.

3. Reason for Decisions Recommended

- 3.1 The Lightbulb Executive and Operational Boards have agreed that Blaby District Council continue to host the Lightbulb Service and that a continued review of the delivery models be undertaken of the delivery models.

- 3.2 Extending the current contractual arrangements with partner authorities ensures continuity across Leicestershire, avoids service disruption, and allows sufficient time to undertake a structured review of the delivery model and existing pilots to inform any future long-term decisions
- 3.3 The proposed cost of delivering the Lightbulb Service for 2025–2026 reflects the staffing structure, roles and salary assumptions that have been reviewed and agreed by the Lightbulb Executive and Operational Boards and is necessary to ensure the service remains responsive and compliant.
- 3.4 Delegated authority is required to allow the service to respond flexibly to operational needs, emerging pressures while maintaining appropriate oversight through the Group Manager and Portfolio Holder to ensure effective governance and value for money.

4. Matters to consider

4.1 Background

Since its launch in October 2017, Lightbulb has continued to evolve through refreshed business cases, new initiatives, and ongoing improvements to operational processes. The service has been shaped by regular reviews of demand data, efficiency modelling and partnership feedback, ensuring it remains responsive to both resident need and system priorities.

The original hub-and-spoke model, with Blaby District Council hosting the central hub functions including management, performance reporting, resilience planning and quality assurance remains the foundation of the service.

The current legal agreement with partner districts is now due to end on 31 March 2025, making this an appropriate point to reassess future delivery arrangements.

Over the last 12 months, work has progressed on an updated delivery document exploring future service options, including the introduction of a dedicated Caseworker role and refinement of leadership structures to strengthen operational resilience.

The publication of the Government's Devolution White Paper, and the emerging direction of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), introduces the possibility of significant strategic and operational change for district councils. Strategic Leads across the partnership therefore support taking additional time to fully understand the implications of LGR, assess future structures, and identify areas where the Lightbulb model can continue to innovate and improve.

Several pilots funded through Disabled Facilities Grant top-slicing have also continued during 2024/25 and 2025/26, with partners agreeing to extend

them into 2026/27. These include the new Caseworker pilot and the DFG transformation manager role. These developments reflect the partnership's ongoing commitment to evidence-based service change.

4.2 Proposal(s)

It is proposed that partners agree to extend the Lightbulb Partnership Agreement for a further 24-month period, up to 31 March 2028, to maintain stability and continuity and to ensure the partnership can plan and implement future changes in a coordinated way.

The proposed extension will:

- Ensure continuity of service delivery while LGR and Devolution arrangements are clarified.
- Provide sufficient time to embed and evaluate key pilots, including the Caseworker role and the DFG Transformation Officer.
- Allow partners to complete a comprehensive service and pilot review, with a full business case for the future model brought forward by March 2028.

It is also proposed that the Service Manager for the Housing Enablement Team (HET) holds joint responsibility for both Lightbulb and HET on a 50/50 funding basis, supported by a newly created Lightbulb Team Leader post to enhance day-to-day management capacity and resilience. No other structural changes are proposed beyond standard annual pay and inflationary adjustments.

It also ensures that residents continue to receive a consistent and high-quality housing support offer across Leicestershire while the system undergoes wider transformation.

4.3 Relevant Consultations

During the development of this document extensive consultation has been undertaken both with all partners involved in the Lightbulb Service, key internal teams such as finance and legal and external bodies such as Foundations. Alongside this the Lightbulb operational & executive board's have been consulted and kept up to date on the development of the document.

4.4 Significant Issues

A proposal was initially requested by Leicestershire County Council to explore the integration of ceiling track hoists into the Lightbulb service model from April 2026. Following further consideration, it has been identified that additional financial, operational and delivery analysis is required before a decision can be taken.

Work is therefore underway in partnership with Leicestershire County Council to gather all the information required, ensuring that any future decision on the long term approach to ceiling track hoists is fully informed if the decision is taken for this to be incorporated a further report will come to Cabinet.

- 4.5 In preparing this report, the author has considered issues related to Human Rights, Legal Matters, Human Resources, Equalities, Public Health Inequalities and there are no areas of concern and the service provides real benefits and support to those most vulnerable in our communities.

5. Environmental impact

- 5.1 Any key decisions will continue to be made with the climate change agenda in mind such as procurement process and service design.

6 What will it cost and are there opportunities for savings?

- 6.1 The total annual cost of delivering the Lightbulb Service for 2026/27 is £1,369,155, of which £388,670 is funded through capitalised Disabled Facilities Grant expenditure. This results in a net revenue cost of £980,485 across all partners.

The funding model continues to ensure a fair and transparent distribution of costs based on service activity, staffing and demand, while maximising the use of capitalised DFG where permissible.

For Blaby District Council, the total contribution for 2026/27 is £146,125, with £86,895 capitalised through DFG, resulting in a net revenue cost of £59,230.

As the host authority, Blaby District Council fully recovers its overhead and hosting costs through the agreed partnership contributions. As a result, no additional corporate or service overhead costs fall to Blaby as a consequence of hosting the Lightbulb Service. This cost recovery approach will continue for the duration of the proposed 24-month extension.

	26/27 Annual Budgeted Amount				
	Central Hub	Localities	Total Contributions	Est Capitalised Amount	Net Cost
	£	£	£	£	
Blaby	26,230	119,895	146,125	86,895	59,230
Charnwood	44,969	0	44,969	0	44,969
Harborough	26,232	83,221	109,453	60,314	49,139
Hinckley & Bosworth	31,853	114,687	146,540	78,502	68,038
Melton	14,990	64,706	79,696	46,896	32,800
Northwest Leicestershire	26,232	97,880	124,112	70,938	53,174
Oadby & Wigston	16,863	62,263	79,126	45,125	34,001
Leicestershire County Council	159,611	479,523	639,134	0	639,134
	346,980	1,022,175	1,369,155	388,670	980,485

7. What are the risks and how can they be reduced?

- 7.1 The primary risks associated with the proposed extension relate to financial pressures, workforce capacity, service demand and maintaining consistent engagement across partners.

These risks are mitigated through robust partnership governance via the Lightbulb Executive and Operational Boards, annual budget review and transparent cost apportionment, including full recovery of Blaby District Council's hosting and overhead costs.

Workforce resilience is supported through strengthened leadership capacity and ongoing service review, while all pilots and service developments are monitored and evaluated to ensure continuity of service and effective delivery.

8. Other options considered

- 8.1 Delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants is a mandatory function of Blaby District Council, there are a number of options for delivery which are being explored, delivering the service as prior to Lightbulb, would be less holistic and preventative and would provide a poorer service to Blaby residents.

9. Appendix

- 9.1 None.

10. Background paper(s)

10.1 None.

11. Report author's contact details

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