



**Service Delivery
Committee**

**Tuesday, 21 March
2017**

Matter for Decision

Title: **Disabled Facilities Grants and The Lightbulb Project**

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. In October 2015 Service Delivery Committee resolved that options for the Council to join the Lightbulb Project as a means of delivering Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's) be explored further with a view to joining the project. Subsequently the Project was tested out by referring two pilot schemes to them and Service Delivery Committee received a further report in July 2016 informing them of progress.
- 1.2. At the time the full details of the project and financial arrangements were still to be developed and it was unclear if all of the districts would commit to delivering their services through Lightbulb. A decision was made in principle to join the project and Officers have continued to work with and support development of the project, which is now moving into its implementation stage.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. Members are asked to consider the contents of this report and give approval for the Council to formally enter into the Lightbulb Project for the delivery of DFG's and associated works with effect from 1 October 2017.
- 2.2. In addition Members are asked to consider if they would be prepared for the Council to enter into an earlier pilot referred to as the phase 1 roll out.

3. Information

- 3.1. In October 2016 Members were advised that the final business case was awaited. When received this contained overall costs at district level but not what each district would contribute. This was because at that time it had not been established how much the County Council would contribute (as a result of moving relevant sections of the Occupational Therapist Service and some administration of DFG's into the Lightbulb Project).
- 3.2. It has subsequently been clarified that the cost to OWBC would be £25,640 per annum for the first full year of operation based on delivering just DFG's. This compares to current expenditure of £34,800 for the delivery of DFG's and Council House Adaptations. The change is therefore expected to be broadly cost neutral.
- 3.3. Development of the project has continued and all District Councils have continued their support for Lightbulb. All the necessary approvals are in place for Blaby DC to host the service and meetings are currently taking place to establish the detailed procedures that would operate. It is now aimed for the project to be fully live by 1 October 2017 and the Districts are in the process of obtaining final approval.
- 3.4. At go live stage, the project will focus on services delivered with DFG's and not include the delivery of Council funded adaption's to its own properties. It is intended however that Council tenants will initially access these services through the same route and therefore have the same opportunities to be signposted to other services.

- 3.5. There are no TUPE transfer implications for OWBC as the vast majority of its service is currently carried out under external contract. OWBC has already trimmed its directly employed staff to 20% of one administrative post and the management of the service has been carried out on an interim basis linked to the provision of Council House Adaptations, pending the outcome of the Lightbulb project.
- 3.6. The Councils current external contract runs on an annual basis from 1st April to 31st March and the service provider is aware that the 2017/18 contract (subject to final Committee approval to deliver future DFG provision through Lightbulb) will be on a reduced run-off basis. Council House adaptations are currently delivered through the same contract and it is proposed this continues for the full 2017/18 financial year.
- 3.7. With regard to DFG funding Members will be aware that there has been dialogue between Districts and County about the top slicing that took place in the 2016/17 financial year which means that the Council will have to provide a top up of around £140,000 to meet the shortfall. However going forward this should not happen in future years. Arising from these discussions there is general consensus amongst districts that DFG money should be spent in meeting DFG's and kept within district in the first instance. In view of this (and that grants had increased in 2016/17) OWBC should in future be under less pressure to provide top up funds and should it need to do so may benefit from the potential to use unspent DFG monies in other districts before the funds are made available to the County for use in other Better Care initiatives.
- 3.8. The Lightbulb Project also seeks to reduce cost of provision of Disabled Facilities through larger scale procurement activities which should benefit all Members.
- 3.9. All districts have completed readiness assessments and Lightbulb are ready to recruit further at hub (central team) and spoke (district team) levels and have training programmes in place.
- 3.10. Finally the Lightbulb Project is looking to implement a phase 1 roll out where another authority (in addition to Blaby and North West Leicestershire) start to start to receive services under the new model prior to full go live on 1st October 2017. This would benefit the project and the authority involved by introducing an element of staggering the role out while at the same time testing the new procedures. In practice it would also give the authority taking up this challenge more direct involvement in developing the working arrangements. Due to contractual delivery arrangements and more complex TUPE arrangements OWBC has been identified as the authority which could most easily do this and are keen to enter into discussions about early roll out. From an Officer point of view this would seem to have advantages compared to joining at the same time as all other districts when the project will be under its most pressure.
- 3.11. As there has been quite a long lead in to this project we have included details of its aims and objectives as a reminder below.

The overall objective of the Lightbulb Project is to deliver savings to the health and care economy by maximising the part housing support can play in keeping people independent in their homes; preventing or reducing care home placements or demand on other social care services; avoiding unnecessary hospital admissions or readmissions or GP visits and facilitating hospital discharge.

The aim is for this to be achieved through improving the customer journey to make it easier to access and navigate the service, ensuring the right solution is available at the right time with the right outcome. Core to this is to provide efficient, cost effective service delivery, particularly in relation to the delivery of Disabled facilities Grants.

This all translates to a one stop shop approach, delivering a consistent customer experience across the County.

Background Documents:-

None.

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Implications	
Financial (CR)	CR1: Decreasing Financial Resources – This may affect the Council's ability to top up Disabled Facilities Grants.
Legal (AC)	No significant legal implications.
Risk (SG)	CR4: Reputation Damage – Failure by the Lightbulb Project to provide or reduce services.
Equalities (SG)	The Lightbulb Project will provide equality of access for all regardless of tenure. An Initial Screening is attached to this report.
	Equality Assessment:-
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Initial Screening <input type="checkbox"/> Full Assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable