

**OFFICER DELEGATION SCHEME
RECORD OF DECISION**

TO BE UPLOADED TO THE INTERNET BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

Date: 26 th January 2024	Ref No: 2212
Responsible Officer: Caroline Malvern, Integrated Commissioning Officer	
Type of Decision (please refer to MO Guidance):	
Key <input type="checkbox"/>	Non-Key <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Freedom of Information Status: <i>(can the report go in the public domain)</i> Yes	
Title/Subject matter: Digital Enablement Pilot for people living with sight loss.	
The report seeks approval to award a grant of £2,000 to Bury Society for Blind and Partially Sighted People to enable adult residents in the borough with visual impairment, the opportunity to participate in a Digital Enablement Pilot.	
Budget/Strategy/Policy/Compliance:	
(i) Is the decision within an Approved Budget?	Yes
(ii) Is the decision in conflict with the council's policies, strategies or relevant service plans?	No
(iii) Does the decision amend existing or raise new policy issues?	No
(iv) Is the decision significant and/or does it meet the £100,000 threshold for recording?	No
(v) Has the s151 & MO been consulted? (Please attach any advice)	
Equality Impact Assessment [Does this decision change policy, procedure or working practice or negatively impact on a group of people? If yes – complete EIA and summarise issues identified and recommendations – forward EIA to Corporate HR]	

1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to seek permission to award a grant of £2,000 to Bury Society for Blind and Partially Sighted People to enable adult residents with visual impairment, the opportunity to participate in a Digital Enablement Pilot. It is an exciting project which will continue to enhance the quality of life, increase independence and reduce isolation.

2. Background

Bury Society for Blind and Partially Sighted People (known as Bury Blind Society) is a local charity that provides a variety of services which aim to enhance the quality of life for all visually impaired residents of Bury.

In 2023, Bury Blind Society received 12-month grant funding of £2,000 from Bury Council to cover the premises costs and volunteer travelling expenses associated with a Digital Enablement Pilot, delivered by Henshaw Society.

The Digital Enablement Pilot is an agreement between Henshaw Society and the Business Growth and Infrastructure Directorate, funded via AEB (Adult Education Budget) to deliver local Digital Inclusion projects.

The agreement between Henshaw Society and the Business Growth and Infrastructure Directorate has now been extended for a further 12-months.

3. Aim of the Pilot

To improve the life chances of people living with sight loss by empowering them to use both mainstream and specialist technology to do everyday tasks, like reading, writing, and communicating, and to develop the skills and confidence to get and stay online to increase opportunities and reduce isolation.

The programme includes:

- Assistive Technology Assessment and Demonstration
- Mainstream & Specialist Technology Training
- Grant Application Support (RNIB and others)
- Skills for Seeing Training
- Digital Information, Advice and Guidance
- Knowledge Village Subscription
- Appropriate referrals into Product Partners

Bury Blind Society involvement in the Pilot:

- To identify people who would benefit from the programme.
- Use of their premises for Henshaw's to deliver clinics.
- Co-ordinate access to the programme.

4. Achievements from the 2022 – 23 Pilot

Henshaw Society's statistics

		Bury
Headline Figures	Unique Individuals	67
	Number of Interventions	149
Assessments	Number of Interventions	37
	Unique Individuals	37
Training Sessions	Number of Interventions	37
	Unique Individuals	20
IAG Interventions	Number of Interventions	75
	Unique Individuals	56
Technology Give Aways		£15,100.00

Feedback from Jill Logan – CEO, Bury Society for Blind and Partially Sighted People.

"In our role as the Sensory Team for Visually Impaired for Bury Council and the local charity for people with sight loss, we embrace the 'Let's Do It' local strategy and look at all aspects of our clients' needs when assessed. By working collaboratively with others, the provision can be greatly enhanced. The project with Henshaw's is a prime example of how this approach can be so beneficial to the individual.

Following assessment by our Team, if the client requires more in-depth tech support, they are referred for a Centre based appointment with Chris from the Henshaw's Tech Team. There they receive personalised one to one tuition, specifically meeting their requirements.

Looking to the future, we are working with our Henshaw's colleagues to develop this pathway and ensure any clients living in the Bury area also access the local support from BBS if they haven't already, providing a complete wrap around service. I believe this project is working well and I'm delighted to hear that funding has been awarded for an additional year."

5. Conclusions

Although there is no financial benefit to Bury Blind Society to work on this programme, they recognise the proposal as an opportunity to enhance the digital assessment undertaken during the initial home assessment by the Early Intervention Team.

There is a financial implication to the Charity's involvement with the project regarding use of premises, with increased utility costs and the funding to

Henshaw Society will not cover travelling expenses. However, use of public transport / private taxi is not an option to some of Bury Blind Society's clients due to needing someone to sight-guide them.

Bury residents are benefiting tremendously from Bury Blind Society's connection to the Pilot, as learning and participating in activities that matter are important wellbeing outcomes.

This Pilot has allowed people to learn or further develop knowledge and skills, which can give a strong sense of independence and improved confidence.

The Social Care White Paper asserts, "*when technology is embedded into care and support services, it can be transformative, helping people to live happy, fulfilled lives in their homes and community*".

6. Recommendations

The recommendation is:

- To award a grant of £2,000 to Bury Blind Society to address the premises and volunteer expenses costs that the Charity will incur, to continue their participation in a Digital Enablement for a 12-month period.

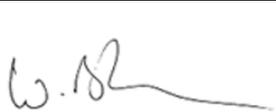
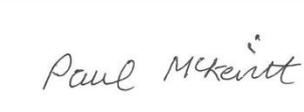
Wards affected: All wards

Consultations:

Scrutiny & Review Committee Interest: N/A

Options considered:

Decision *[with reasons]*

Decision made by:	Signature:	Date:
Executive Director – Health and Adult Care		26 February 2024
Section 151 Officer		26 February 2024
Members Consulted <i>[see note 1 below]</i>		

Cabinet Member		29 February 2024
Lead Member	NA	
Opposition Spokesperson		

Notes

1. Where, in accordance with the requirements of the Officer Delegation Scheme, a Chief Officer consults with the appropriate Cabinet Member they must sign the form so as to confirm that they have been consulted and that they agree with the proposed action. The signature of the Opposition Spokesperson should be obtained if required, to confirm that he/she has been consulted. Please refer to the MO Guidance.
2. **This form must not be used for urgent decisions.**
3. Where there is any doubt, Corporate Directors should err on the side of caution and seek advice from the Council's Monitoring Officer.