



## Agenda for Poverty Working Panel Monday, 24th June, 2024, 10.00 am

### Members of Poverty Working Panel

Councillors: P Arnott, M Chapman, B Collins, M Goodman,  
D Haggerty, J Heath, D Ledger (Chair), M Martin, M Rixson and  
S Smith

**Venue:** Online via the Zoom app

**Contact:** Sarah James;

01395 519978 Email: [sjames@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:sjames@eastdevon.gov.uk)

(or group number 01395 517546)

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East Devon District Council  
Blackdown House  
Border Road  
Heathpark Industrial Estate  
Honiton  
EX14 1EJ

DX 48808 HONITON

Tel: 01404 515616

[www.eastdevon.gov.uk](http://www.eastdevon.gov.uk)

- 1 Apologies
- 2 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 18 March 2024 (Pages 2 - 4)
- 3 Declarations of interest  
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- 4 Public speaking  
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- 5 Updated terms of reference for Poverty Working Panel (Pages 5 - 7)
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Members of the public exercising their right to speak during Public Speaking will be recorded.

[Decision making and equalities](#)

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**EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL****Minutes of the meeting of Poverty Working Panel held at Online via the Zoom app on 18 March 2024****Attendance list at end of document**

The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 11.23 am

**13 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 November 2023**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 November 2023 were noted as a true and accurate record.

**14 Declarations of interest**

There were none.

**15 Public speaking**

No members of the public had registered to speak at the meeting.

**16 Devon Communities Together (Voluntary, Community & Social Enterprise) presentation**

The Chair welcomed Ms Natalie Campbell, Service Delivery Lead for Devon Communities Together.

Ms Campbell delivered a presentation which detailed the Financial Resilience Project being worked on by Devon Communities Together along with East Devon District Council and other partners. The project is in its early stages and the presentation set out the progress so far, and the plans for future working.

Discussion and clarification included the following points:

- Devon Communities Together are new to this project and are learning about new groups, voluntary organisations and faith groups, as key resources in the community, as well as getting to know the communities around the district.
- Members expressed concern about the number of residents in fuel poverty. Devon Communities Together will be working with community groups to address some of the issues, and the Council could consider in strategic planning what could be done to alleviate the problem.
- It is unclear how food providers can further scale within the district because storage is problematic and if storage capacity is increased, providers risk becoming liable for business rates. The Assistant Director – Revenues and Benefits will explore with the Chair how this might be addressed, moving forward.

The Chair thanked Ms Campbell for an insightful presentation.

**17 Household Support Fund update**

The Benefits and Financial Resilience Manager introduced this update report which detailed the background to the Housing Support Fund (HSF), set out how the funding is deployed, and outlined future support under the fifth HSF as set out in the 2024 Spring Budget.

In discussion, it was noted that there are a small number of people who are eligible for support under the HSF but decline the support, and others who are difficult to contact. The Council are working closely with the voluntary sector to better understand how to reach people and the reasons why some people turn down the offer of financial assistance.

18 **Pilot project with Financial Resilience and Private Sector Housing - Improving homes for low-income families**

The Benefits and Financial Resilience Manager and the Public Sector Housing Technical Officer delivered a presentation which detailed, with case studies, a pilot project being worked on by the Financial Resilience and Private Sector Housing teams, together with the Climate Change Officer, exploring how the Council can help low-income households to improve their accommodation.

The Chair commended all officers involved in this work which is changing lives and is an excellent example of cross-service working.

Discussion and clarification included the following points:

- Following the doubling of Council Tax on second homes from April 2025, officers will be monitoring the data with a view to understanding what the movement is on second homes and whether this is consistent with the policy aim of bringing properties back into use for people in the community.
- Members expressed concern about properties which are left unoccupied by owners on a long term basis, when they could be lived in or let out. It was noted that where this is the case and properties are falling into disrepair or causing nuisance, then complaints can be raised by emailing the Private Sector Housing team at [PSHousing@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:PSHousing@eastdevon.gov.uk). Empty homes also become subject to higher council tax charges, to discourage homeowners from leaving properties empty. Additionally, the Council has an Empty Homes Strategy, currently under review.
- Private Sector Housing are seeing more complex cases of landlords failing to maintain properties to an acceptable standard, and the team work proactively and reactively with landlords to bring about improvements to properties.
- In instances where households are living in accommodation which is in poor condition and cost of living funding is used to finance improvements, it was confirmed that applications are subject to extensive financial and eligibility checks. Additionally, in the case of rented properties, a clause in the application prohibits landlords from increasing rents based on the works that the Council has carried out. Homeowners who are helped under the scheme also have the charges secured against their property under the Land Registry, ensuring that costs are paid back before any sale of the property completes.

**Attendance List**

**Councillors present:**

M Chapman  
M Goodman  
J Heath  
D Ledger (Chair)  
M Martin

M Rixson

**Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)**

K Bloxham  
C Fitzgerald

**Officers in attendance:**

Matthew Blythe, Assistant Director Environmental Health  
Sharon Church, Benefits Manager  
Emma Congerton, Assistant Director Statutory Housing  
Shannon Grover, Technical Officer  
Jody Harding, Principal Environmental Health Officer  
Libby Jarrett, Assistant Director Revenues, Benefits, Corporate Customer Access, Fraud & Compliance  
Sarah Jenkins, Democratic Services Officer  
Sarah James, Democratic Services Officer  
Helen Wharam, Public Health Project Officer

**Councillor apologies:**

P Arnott  
B Collins

Chair: .....

Date: .....



Report to: Poverty Working Panel

Date of Meeting 24 June 2024

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

## Updated Terms of Reference for Poverty Panel meetings

### Report summary:

This reports sets out the proposed updated terms of reference for the Poverty panel meetings. Since the Poverty panel was set up in 2020 there has been no update to the Terms of Reference. It is important these are now reviewed and updated to ensure they remain relevant and fit for purpose. The revised terms of reference are based on the following headings:

- Purpose and objectives
- Membership & frequency of meetings
- Scope of meetings
- Outcomes
- Review

The updated terms of reference (see appendix 1) provide greater clarity and relevance on the role of the Poverty panel as we move forward.

### Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget                      Yes  No

Policy Framework    Yes  No

### Recommendation:

That the Poverty panel recommend to Cabinet to approve the updated Terms of Reference.

### Reason for recommendation:

The old terms of reference were very much focussed on the creation of a Poverty Strategy which is also due for review. The proposed new terms of reference are aiming to be more relevant with greater clarity on purpose, objectives and outcomes in order to provide a more robust framework for this important work on behalf of Cabinet.

Officer: Libby Jarrett, Assistant Director Revenues, Benefits, Customer Services, Fraud & Compliance

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Climate Action and Emergency Response
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- Communications and Democracy
- Economy
- Finance and Assets

- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities
- Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism

**Equalities impact** Low Impact

**Climate change** Low Impact

**Risk:** Low Risk

**Links to background information** [Existing Terms of Reference](#)

**Link to [Council Plan](#)**

Priorities (check which apply)

- Better homes and communities for all
- A greener East Devon
- A resilient economy

### **Financial implications:**

There are no direct financial implications by approving the ToR.

### **Legal implications:**

There are no substantive legal issues to be added to this report.

Appendix 1

## **Poverty Working Panel (PWP) Terms of Reference**

### **1.0 Purpose and objectives of PWP**

The Poverty Panel was established by Cabinet in February 2020. In so doing Cabinet agreed the following as the purpose of the Panel:

*To assist Cabinet in the development of an East Devon Poverty Strategy, to monitor progress against the Strategy once adopted and to review the Strategy on an ongoing basis and to make recommendations to amend it as appropriate.*

The Poverty Panel's primary purpose as set out in the council plan is 'to enhance the quality of life for residents in our district'. The panel will do this by:

- Ensuring the poverty strategy remains relevant.
- Delivers against the aims of the strategy.
- Helping to inform and shape updates to the strategy and a SMART action plan.
- Considering and monitoring progress of tasks noted in the action plan.
- Providing direction and challenge to officers
- Making recommendations to Cabinet including lobbying
- Supporting opportunities for collaborating with various stakeholders to help alleviate poverty.

### **2.0 Membership and frequency of meetings**

Membership: The Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Homes and Communities plus 9 Members (appointed at Annual Council)

Chair: Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Homes and Communities

Support Officers: Assistant Director Revenues and Benefits, Benefits and Financial Resilience Manager, Assistant Director Housing Statutory Services, Public Health Project Officer

Meetings: Three times per year

Quorum: Three Members

The Poverty Working Panel may invite organisation representatives with relevant expertise to attend on a 'one off' basis to discuss a particular issue.

The Poverty Working Panel meetings will be open to the public but may move into private session (Part B) to discuss confidential or sensitive matters. Minutes will be published on the Council's website.

### **3.0 Scope of meetings**

A work programme for each year will be put in place to ensure that the Council is meeting the aims of the poverty strategy and the purposes shown in section 1. This will be shaped by Members of the poverty panel and supported by officers.

Meetings will aim to include:

- How the council is supporting residents who are in poverty
- Views of key stakeholders and partners
- Experiences of people who are financially struggling.
- Consideration of the conclusions and recommendations from national reports with an assessment of the implications for East Devon
- Identification of good practice/research elsewhere and whether there is any learning to inform East Devon's approach.
- Monitoring of outcomes against the strategy

### **4.0 Outcomes**

The Poverty panel will provide the focus and framework for ensuring successful delivery of the poverty strategy. It will also provide the scrutiny, transparency and accountability for the agreed actions that will be delivered. This supports the Council priority of a supported and engaged community by seeing:

- An up to date and relevant strategy and action plan with SMART objectives.
- Successful delivery against the strategy and action plan.
- Recommendations to Cabinet are deliverable.
- Increased collaboration with stakeholders.
- Increased councillor understanding about the Poverty Strategy.
- Greater public awareness of the work of the Poverty Strategy.
- Evidenced proposals that will lead to the strategy being fit for purpose.
- Annual report on activities and achievements against the action plan that will be presented to Cabinet.

### **5.0 Review**

The Poverty Working Panel will review these terms of reference annually at the first meeting following Annual Council, to ensure they are still relevant and meeting the aims of the Panel.

**Poverty Working Panel Work Programme 2024 - 2025**

<b>Proposed date</b>	<b>Topic</b>
28 October 2024	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Agree the updated Poverty Strategy (including action plan) and making recommendations to Cabinet/Council.</li> <li>2. VCSE to present an update on outcomes of first year.</li> <li>3. Present update on Welfare spending.</li> <li>4. Internal /External speaker update</li> </ol>
24 February 2025	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Progress against action plan</li> <li>2. Internal/External speaker update.</li> </ol>





## Poverty Strategy Briefing Paper

### 1.0 Background

Since adopting the current strategy there is now a need for an updated strategy that provides for:

- reflecting the key priorities within the Council Plan
- a SMART delivery/action plan that forms part of our strategy
- an evidence based strategy
- reflection of the learning over the past 4 years
- a greater focus on working collaboratively with partners
- understanding and delivery of place-based financial resilience support for the individual and local community
- exploration of how local businesses can help their communities through contributing to corporate social responsibility objectives
- recognition of the dependency that emergency financial support has provided through the Cost of Living Crisis (previously Covid) and how we will need to address this
- our current strategy ends 1 July 2024 and therefore needs reviewing.

### 2.0 Proposed Timelines

Date	Task
July 24	Research and consult with Devon Communities Together
Early August 24	Consult with Members of Poverty panel to capture key themes to be included.
August 24	Start drafting Strategy
Early – Mid September	Consultation with internal stakeholders (Housing, Private Sector Housing, Economy, Revenues, Public Health Officer, etc)
Early – Mid September	Consultation with external stakeholders (Citizens Advice, Exeter Community Energy, Devon County Council, Other Voluntary groups, etc)
Late September 24	Summarise and incorporate consultation feedback.
Late September 24	Finalise draft strategy
Early October 24	Update Chair of Poverty Panel on proposed Final
17 October 24	Submit report for Poverty Panel on final draft to be recommended to Cabinet
28 October 24	Present proposed updated Poverty Strategy to Poverty panel
27 November 24	Cabinet meeting for recommendation to Council for approval



## Poverty Panel Meeting 24 June 2024

### Briefing Paper: Household Support Fund (HSF)

#### 1.0 Introduction

The Household Support Fund (HSF) has been in place since 1 October 2021 and since then we have been working with Devon County Council (DCC) and other Devon districts to ensure we are all approaching administering the scheme under the same Devon wide framework.

We are now into our fifth HSF scheme that covers the period 01 April 2024 to 30 September 2024.

At the Cabinet meeting on 5 June 2024 Members agreed the draft policy for administering the £284,944 allocated to East Devon District Council.

#### 2.0 Deployment of HSF4 Fund

As agreed with DCC and the Devon Local Authorities group the £646,066 fund for 2023/24 was separated into two periods.

- For the period 1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024 £290,729.70 (45%)
- For the period 1 October 2023 to 31 March 2024 £355,336.30 (55%)

We provided Members with an update of spend at the March 2024 poverty panel. A copy of that briefing paper can be seen in appendix 1. As at the 7 March 2024 we had £105,840.60 remaining in the budget, this was carried over for the October 2023 to March 2024 period.

#### 1 October to 31 March spending

We targeted support to the following cohorts:

- A payment of £350 for any household with one of the monitored groups\*\* present in receipt of HB and/or CTR and property is EPC rated E or below.
- A payment of £300 for any household with one of the monitored groups present in receipt of HB and/or CTR.
- A payment of £180 for any household in receipt of HB or receiving CTR in income band 1.

\*\* Monitored groups include households where children, residents receiving a disability payment, carers and previous serving members of the armed forces are resident in the household.

We also received funding of £63,516 from Devon County Council via the Economic Hardship Fund. This amount was added to our Household Support Fund as there was a requirement to use the funds by 31 March 2024. The funding allowed us to support a further 349 residents with a one-off payment of £180. These were

households who had not received a government cost of living payment or who we were awarding a targeted payment from the HSF.

1,358 residents were written to advising that a payment had been allocated to them and how they could claim that payment. Of those 1,192 (87.78%) residents made an application to receive their payment.

We made and attempted to contact those residents who had not made an application. Some contact resulted in an officer providing support to complete an application over the phone. Others told officers they did not want to receive the payment as they felt they could manage without it, or their circumstances had changed, and they no longer met the criteria to receive the award. 19 cases have been referred to the Financial Resilience Team for further financial resilience work.

The following tables show the breakdown of awards based on our monitored groups for part 2 (targeted support) of the scheme.

### Pension Age

Monitored groups	Vol	%
Pension age	595	57.88%
Pension age - Disabled	218	21.21%
Pension age - Carer	17	1.65%
Pension age - with children	12	1.17%
Pension age - Armed Forces	54	5.25%
Pension age - Disabled & Carer	74	7.20%
Pension age - Disabled & Children	6	0.58%
Pension age - Disabled & Armed Forces	29	2.82%
Pension age - Carer & with children	5	0.49%
Pension age - Carer & Armed Forces	5	0.49%
Pension age - with children & Armed Forces	0	0.00%
Pension age - Carer, Disabled & Armed Forces	13	1.26%
Pension age - Carer, with children, Disabled & Armed Forces	0	0.00%
<b>Pension age Sub-Total</b>	<b>1028</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

### Working Age

Working age	78	68.42%
Working age - Disabled	10	8.77%
Working age - Carer	3	2.63%
Working age - with children	9	7.89%
Working age - Armed Forces	3	2.63%
Working age - Disabled & Carer	6	5.26%
Working age - Disabled & Children	0	0.00%
Working age - Disabled & Armed Forces	1	0.88%
Working age - Carer & with children	1	0.88%
Working age - Carer & Armed Forces	0	0.00%
Working age - with children & Armed Forces	0	0.00%
Working age - Carer, Disabled & Armed Forces	3	2.63%
Working age - Carer, with children, Disabled & Armed Forces	0	0.00%
<b>Working age Sub-Total</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

- 50 cases did not provide monitoring information when completing the form.
- Pensionable age residents (not on Pension Credit) were not included as a cohort to receive a government cost of living payment. This is despite them being on low

incomes and is the reason that they make up 86% of the overall total receiving an award.

- In total 469 awards (39.35%) were made to households in one of the monitored groups. These households received a targeted award of £300 or higher.
- 360 households(30.20%) had a resident present in the household who was disabled.
- 127 (10.65%) were households with a carer resident.
- 108 households (9.06%) had a previous serving member of the armed forces resident.
- 33 households (2.77%) had a child present. As expected, this number was low and likely due to most households with children present being entitled to the government cost-of-living payment.

### 3.0 Make-up of open application awards

The open applications process allowed residents who we had not provided a targeted payment to, to still apply for an award from the fund. This was necessary as not all residents who would be entitled to HB or CTR have made a claim for one of these benefits and was also a requirement of the scheme.

For the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, 1462 awards were made via the open application route, with a total of £268,642.11 awarded.

The following table shows the reasons for awards made through the open application process.

	<b>Food</b>	<b>Energy &amp; Water</b>	<b>Essentials linked to Energy &amp; Water</b>	<b>Wider Essentials</b>	<b>Housing Costs</b>
<b>Spend</b>	£165,318.00	£17,531.87	£51,184.76	£33,844.44	£763.04
<b>Volumes</b>	1105	198	83	74	2

The tables below show the make up of those households based on the monitored characteristics for the period 01 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

<b>Direct Applications - Approved</b>	<b>Vol</b>	<b>%</b>
Pension age	23	95.83%
Pension age - Disabled	21	87.50%
Pension age - with children	2	8.33%
Pension age - Disabled & Children	1	4.17%
<b>Pension age Sub-Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>195.83%</b>
Working age	444	79.29%
Working age - Disabled	234	41.79%
Working age - with children	382	68.21%
Working age - Disabled & Children	194	34.64%
<b>Working age Sub-Total</b>	<b>1254</b>	<b>223.93%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1301</b>	

\*Note: not all the 1462 residents who applied via the open application supplied monitoring data, however this represents 89% of applications.

- Residents who are of pensionable age are less likely to make an open application to the fund than those of working age.
- Requests for help to buy food is still the highest approach.
- Of the 1301 applications approved 450 (35%) had a disabled resident in the household.

Total Budget:

HSF - £646,066.00

EVF - £63,516.00

**Total - £709,582.00**

Total Spend for period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

Targeted support 1 April 23 – 30 September 23	£173,550.00
Open Applications 1 April 23 – 30 September 23	£106,352.28
Targeted Support 1 October 23 – 31 March 24	£264,660.00
Open Applications 1 October 23 – 31 March 24	£162,289.83
<b>Total Spend 01 April 23 – 31 March 24</b>	<b>£706,852.11</b>

#### **4.0 HSF5 1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024**

The HSF5 policy was agreed by Members at cabinet on the 05 June 2024.

We have a total of £284,944.00 to administer to our low-income households for the period 01 April 2024 to 30 September 2024.

As noted in the cabinet report there are no government cost of living payments made from April 2024. This meant we are unable to allocate a payment to as many cohorts as we were in previous schemes.

Based on our data gathered over the last months we know that disabled residents and carers are still the most likely to request extra financial support. However, given the numbers of residents in this cohort we have had to include the following qualifying criteria:

- In receipt of full Housing Benefit and/or full Council Tax Reduction and,
  - Have under £3,000 in capital and,
  - Have someone living in the household who is disabled or a carer.
- Or
- The resident is a care leaver who are in receipt of a Council Tax relief and other district benefits such as Discretionary Housing Payment.

As with previous scheme we will be sending letters to all those who have been allocated a payment and will provide support to those who require help to complete the on-line application.

## **5.0 Other Considerations**

The future of the Household Support Fund beyond the end of September 2024 is unknown, although we have been previously advised that this is unlikely to continue. Future announcements will largely depend on the political landscape and whether there will be an easing of the current cost of living crisis.

We have our own cost of living hardship fund, and we are still looking at deploying this funding in a pro-active way. We are continuing our pilot with Private Sector Housing and the climate change officer, however this project is still in its early days. We are hoping to update members with further details on the pilot at a future poverty panel meeting later this financial year.

We are continuing to work with Devon Communities Together to look at how we can reach households that are not currently engaging with us, along with partners in the voluntary sector to ensure that as many of our residents as possible are accessing the support available to them.

## **6.0 Summary**

We successfully administered all the funds allocated to us from the HSF4 and are expecting to administer 100% of the funds from HSF5.

We will continue to look at how we can best support households in need especially given that there may not be any further funding beyond the 30 September 2024. The work of the Financial Resilience Officers is critical in being able to provide that wider support, especially if there is not going to be further emergency funding from government.

## **Appendix one**

### **Poverty Panel Meeting 18 March 2024**

#### **Briefing Paper: Household Support Fund**

##### **1.0 Background**

The Household Support Fund (HSF) has been in place since 1 October 2021 when it was announced that funding would be made available to provide help with the global inflationary challenges and the significantly rising cost of living.

HSF schemes have been delivered under a Devon wide framework agreed by Devon County Council (DCC) and other Devon districts who meet on a regular basis to discuss deployment of the fund. This ensures that we are all approaching administering the scheme in the same way, whilst allowing for local needs based on the demographics of each area.

We are currently under our fourth HSF scheme that covers the period 01 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

At the Cabinet meeting on 29 March 2023 members agreed the policy to administer the £631,549.00 allocated to East Devon District Council.

##### **2.0 Deployment of the Fund**

As agreed with DCC and the Devon Local Authorities group the fund for 2023/24 was separated into two periods;

- For the period 1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024 £284,188 (45%)
- For the period 1 October 2023 to 31 March 2024 £347,341 (55%)

###### 01 April 2023 to 30 September 2023

The fund is used to provide targeted support and for open applications.

Benefit records were used to identify all residents in receipt of Housing Benefit (HB) and/or Council Tax Reduction (CTR) to receive a one-off payment of £150.00, provided they had not already received a cost-of-living payment from the government.

1364 residents were targeted for the £150 support with 1157 (84.82%) making an application and receiving the payment a total of £173,550.00.

Follow up calls were made to residents who did not make an application. Officer support provided by Customer Services and the Benefits team was put into place for those residents who were not able to complete their on-line application themselves.

The open applications process allowed for any residents who we had not targeted a payment to. This was necessary as not all residents who would be entitled to HB or CTR have made a claim for one of these benefits.

For this period 590 applications were made with a total of £106,352.28 awarded.

Total awarded under scheme for period April to September - **£279,902.28.**

Remaining £4,285.72 carried forward to be used for October to March allocation.

Period 1 October 2024 to 32 March 2024

The fund was again used for targeted support and open applications.

The policy was updated to reflect the groups that were being targeted.

- A payment of £350 for any household with one of the monitored groups\*\* present in receipt of HB and/or CTR and property is EPC rated E or below.
- A payment of £300 for any household with one of the monitored groups present in receipt of HB and/or CTR.
- A payment of £180 for any household in receipt of HB or receiving CTR in income band 1.

\*\* Monitored groups include households where children, residents receiving a disability payment, carers and previous serving members of the armed forces are resident in the household.

1010 households from the above groups have received a letter advising them they can receive a payment.

To date £127,360.00 has been claimed. We are still receiving applications and are in the process of making payments. Follow up calls will be made as part of normal practice to ensure that as many as residents as possible receive their award.

From the 1 October 2023 to 07 March 2024 631 households totalling £114,150.40 were made from open applications.

Total spend to 07 March 2024 = £241,500.40

Remaining budget - £105,840.60.

We anticipate all funding will be used by 31 March 2024.

Our direct application process remains open as we still have our cost-of-living hardship funds available.

Payments for targeted support have been and will continue to be made by BACs or by Post Office vouchers.



### 3.0 Make-up of awards

The following table shows the reasons for awards being made when a resident has made a claim for support through the open application process.

	<b>Food</b>	<b>Energy &amp; Water</b>	<b>Essentials linked to Energy &amp; Water</b>	<b>Wider Essentials</b>	<b>Housing Costs</b>
<b>Spend</b>	£143,833.00	£16,133.16	£28,708.04	£31,065.44	£763.04
<b>Volumes</b>	941	175	35	68	2

### 4.0 Future Support

In the 2024 Spring Budget the chancellor announced a further 6 months of Household Support Fund.

DCC are still awaiting details of the funding and are therefore unable to provide confirmation of the amounts that we will be given to administer. It is expected that Devon Local Authorities will be given approximately 40% of the funding to administer to their residents.

How the fund will be administered will depend on any criteria placed on the funding by central government. If there are no changes then it is likely that previous frameworks will apply to the fifth round of funding.

Further details of the allocations that EDDC will receive and the criteria for administering this support will be provided once received.

### 5.0 Other Considerations

We received £63,516 from Devon County Council to help low-income households through their Economic Vulnerability Fund. This funding must be spent by 31 March 2024. This funding is being used to support the 349 residents who did not get a government cost of living payment or a payment from our HSF. These residents will receive a £180.00 to ensure that this funding is supporting East Devon's residents.

The future of the Household Support Fund beyond the end of September 2024 is currently unknown. Future announcements will largely depend on the political landscape and whether there will be an easing of the current cost of living crisis.

EDDC have their own cost of living hardship fund which we are currently looking at deploying in a pro-active way in conjuncture with Private Sector Housing. This pilot project is still in it's very early days but seeks to help low-income households living in accommodation that is sub-standard, e.g. suffering from damp and mould, by way of providing funding for improvements that are not able to be funded by other grants available.

We are also currently working with Devon Communities Together to look at how we can reach households who we are not currently engaging with, or who do not know of the financial support available.

We also continue to work with the voluntary sector to ensure that our residents are making the most of the opportunities available that have been set up to support them within their local communities.

## **6.0 Summary**

As can be seen there are several ways in which EDDC supports their residents and whilst government funding beyond September 2024 is uncertain, we will continue to work towards accessing other means of support.

Once details of the fifth HSF are received, we will bring a report to Cabinet proposing how this funding could be deployed.



# East Devon Public Health Strategy 2024 – 2027

Improving health and wellbeing for  
communities across East Devon



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*Stroke survivors exercise class. © LED Community Leisure*

*Cover photo: Wellbeing Walk Leaders event at White Cross, to celebrate all volunteers who help the programme. © LED Community Leisure*

# 1 Why a public health strategy

Everything we do as a council aims to ensure that East Devon is a place where people want to live, work, visit and enjoy life.


## Message from Cllr Ledger

“I am pleased to introduce our new Public Health Strategy here. We believe we have an overarching responsibility to consider health and wellbeing in all our activities. We want to help improve the health and wellbeing of communities across East Devon.

As leaders we have scope to influence our population’s health and wellbeing. We work together with other organisations and with local people to create an outstanding community, economy and environment for East Devon, now and for future generations. We aim to ensure that everyone in East Devon has an equal chance to lead a long, happy and healthy life.

After emerging from the Covid-19 pandemic and entering a cost of living crisis, it is timely for us to review and update our Public Health Strategy going forward into 2024.

Our new Strategy reflects this. It sets the scene locally, gives a flavour of what we have already achieved, then outlines our strategic aims and priority activities. It identifies how we will meet these aims and acknowledges the vital role our partners play, then explains how our key council strategies and plans fit together. Although this is not a statutory requirement, our commitment reflects our local choice, because we believe it is the right thing to do for the benefit of our communities.”

 This image cannot currently be displayed.

*Cllr Dan Ledger, Portfolio Holder Sustainable Homes & Communities © EDDC*

# What we mean by public health

Public health is the science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health through the organised efforts of society.

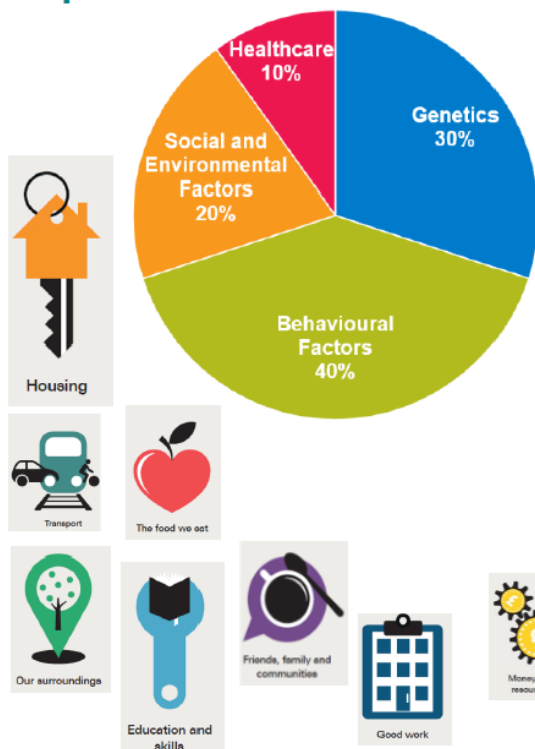
The term 'public health' is used here to cover the physical, mental and social wellbeing, of everyone in our district throughout our strategy.

Public health activities include:

- Assessing the health of populations.
- Forming policies to prevent or manage health problems and significant disease conditions.
- Promoting healthy environments.
- Societal action to invest in health-promoting living conditions.

Genetics and healthcare together have only 40% impact on the risk of morbidity and mortality. Behavioural, social and environmental factors have a 60% impact on those risks. Housing, transport, diet, surroundings, education and skills, friends / family / community, employment, money and resources can all be modified.

## Impact of Different Factors on risk of morbidity and mortality



### In Devon:

- 2.7% are frail and it is estimated to rise to 3.9% by 2038
- Most areas of the county have significantly higher levels of frailty compared to national average (1.9%)
- 1 in 3 people live with one or more long term conditions

### Opportunities

- Detection and prevention to address risk factors at an early stage to reduce ill health and burden on health and social care services

Source: Schroeder, SA (2007). 'We Can Do Better – Improving the Health of the American People'. New England Journal of Medicine. 357: 1221-8 (cited in Public Health England Strategic Plan, 2016-2020)

**Health and Wellbeing**  
Committed to promoting health equality

Devon  
South Coast

## 2 Setting the scene locally

A lot has happened since we published our [East Devon Public Health Strategic Plan 2019–2023](#). We moved through the stages of the covid-19 pandemic and into a national cost of living crisis, both of which have impacted on our health and wellbeing.

We cannot succeed in isolation. We work in partnership and we reflect local, regional and national priorities. Alongside East Devon’s priorities, we support work by Devon County Council, Devon’s Integrated Care System “One Devon” and the UK Health Security Agency. Devon County Council has the statutory responsibility for Public Health through the Health and Social Care Act 2012, the Director of Public Health, and the Health and Wellbeing Board. Our local choice to support this work dovetails with Devon’s Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020-25, to the benefit our communities.

We use evidence such as data collated by Devon County Council’s public health intelligence team to understand and focus on local priority issues and communities. We also take account of “soft intelligence” by listening to conversations with officers, elected members, partners and key stakeholders.

### Financial position

The period covered by this strategy is likely to be challenging. Public services face continual change and increasing challenges including:

- Less money from the government.
- Changes to how councils can raise money.
- More people living here including more older people.
- Worsening local, national and global economic, environmental and social issues.

The economic and financial pressures seen through the pandemic, together with rising inflation and increasing energy, food and fuel costs mean that Devon’s residents have been particularly affected. The cost of living is increasing across the UK, and Devon is particularly vulnerable due to lower-than-average salaries and above-average housing and other costs.

### Our district – where we are today

Devon is the third largest county in England. The county council area has around 800,000 residents, with a higher proportion of older people than the national average. It is also one of the most sparsely populated counties, with few large settlements and a dispersed rural population. East Devon’s catchment covers 314 square miles, and serves a resident population plus numerous summer visitors. ONS Census data shows East Devon’s population increased by 13.9% from under 132,500 in 2011 to around 150,800 in 2021.



Population growth was higher in East Devon than across the South West. The population is diverse in its age-distribution: for example Cranbrook has a particularly young population while Budleigh has unusually high numbers of centenarians.



New houses in Cranbrook. © EDDC



Axminster memory café. © LED Community Leisure

More details of our district are available from our [Knowing East Devon report - East Devon](#).



## 3 What we have already done - some recent highlights

We publish [annual reviews](#) of each previous year's progress towards our Public Health Strategy.

We are particularly proud of how we stepped up into new and uncharted roles to provide the support we gave to our residents during the Covid-19 lockdowns, for instance ranging from offering phone advice, making welfare visits, delivering emergency food to helping local NHS teams deliver vaccines in our Maer Road carpark.

During this phase we forged stronger links with many community and third sector groups as well as with the County Council and other District Councils.



*Government emergency food boxes for onward distribution, and*



*NHS vaccine station set up in Maer Road © EDDC*

As we all started learning to live with covid, the extent of difficulties caused by the pandemic and the emerging national cost of living crisis became increasingly apparent.

Poverty has a direct impact on health and wellbeing. Council teams have worked hard to implement numerous schemes offering support to individuals and to businesses, reporting work to the Poverty Working Panel as described here: [About the Poverty reduction strategy - Evolving our approach - our strategy for tackling poverty - East Devon](#)

In response to concerns about deteriorating mental wellbeing, we have funded some local projects aimed at supporting children and their parents/carers in 2022-23 and 2023-24.

# 4 Where we want to be - aims and priorities

Our Strategy aims to be challenging but realistic. We can influence some but not all aspects that affect the health of individuals and of communities.

Challenging but realistic

## Strategic aims

We respect equality and diversity and would like everyone in East Devon to have an equal chance to lead a long, happy and healthy life. We aim to help influence aspects of health and wellbeing described in three very broad terms:

1. **Healthy People:** focuses on health outcomes such as life expectancy, physical health conditions like dementia, cancer and kidney disease, disability, personal wellbeing and mental health.
2. **Healthy Lives:** focuses on health-related behaviours and personal circumstances including obesity, hypertension, drug misuse, smoking and cancer screening.
3. **Healthy Places:** focuses on the wider social, economic and environmental drivers of health such as crime, unemployment, child poverty, pollution, noise and road traffic.

## Priority activities

In these challenging times and to achieve fairer health outcomes for vulnerable groups and communities, we must prioritise our activities and communities on which to focus.

### What activities will we focus on?

For more details and an overview of the evidence behind our choice of priorities, please see the companion report *East Devon Public Health Strategy 2024 – 2027: Evidence-base for our priorities*.

“There are a lot of things people can do themselves which will delay the point where they first have disability and then multi-morbidity. They are old-fashioned things, actually. Having lots of exercise, having mental stimulation and a social network, eating a reasonably balanced diet (with) not too much high fat, sugar and salt, moderating alcohol, stopping smoking if you do – these are things which are old fashioned, but they still work.” Chris Whitty [2023]



*Swim To Sea class for adults, Exmouth. © LED community Leisure*

Almost half of the burden of illness in the UK is associated with four unhealthy behaviours: smoking, excessive alcohol consumption, poor diet and low levels of physical activity. We will focus on local activities which we are most able to support or influence. Our priorities are:

- Cost of living crisis.
- Mental health.
- Unpaid carers.
- Loneliness and social isolation.
- Dementia.
- Homelessness, housing and indoor environment factors.
- Smoking.
- Alcohol and other drug use.
- Diet and nutrition.
- Physical activity.
- Pandemic preparedness.
- Health effects of climate and adverse weather events.



*Early-intervention mental wellbeing work delivered to primary schools in partnership with LED Community Leisure © HeadsUp CIC*

### Which communities will we focus on?

To reduce health inequalities, we must prioritise those communities that are most deprived. There is overlap with the priority activities listed above, e.g. homelessness; we will work across the East Devon district with particular focus on communities in most need, including deprived and isolated rural communities.

To identify priority communities we will assess statistical data, as a local council we also want to use our local knowledge and we will respond to “soft” intelligence such as information received from officers, councillors, other agencies and our third sector partners.

## 5 How we will get there

To achieve our strategic aims and meet our priority activities we will:

- Promote wellbeing and self-care.
- Encourage healthier behaviour so fewer people become ill.
- Tackle environmental and social conditions to promote good health.



To achieve our aims we will:

- As a major employer we will take seriously our responsibilities towards health and wellbeing of our staff and our opportunities to lead by example.
- Work together across services to identify health and wellbeing priorities in each annual service plan, such that a golden thread runs throughout council actions.
- Seek and respond to new opportunities, continuing to build strong partnerships and maximising partnership-working including with volunteers.
- Explore the concept of “citizens as partners” and facilitate them “finding their own solutions” in a range of creative and accessible ways.
- Align our activities to support those of One Devon Integrated Care System and with Devon County Council as they deliver their statutory duties.
- Support East Devon’s communities and residents in making it a healthier place.
- Plan for healthy communities in all developments e.g. via health impact assessment.
- Aim to adopt a health-in-all-policies approach e.g. via council report templates.
- Liaise with LED Community Leisure e.g. over opportunities for re-badging spaces ‘health hubs’ for health as well as leisure.
- Ensure that our outstanding environment contributes to health and wellbeing.
- Ensure there are enough resources to improve health and wellbeing across the district.
- Embrace technologies to share health messages and help to improve health literacy.
- Continue to monitor evidence to inform and update priorities e.g. via JSNA data.
- Monitor how we are doing, then report and publish progress annually.

## Playing to our strengths

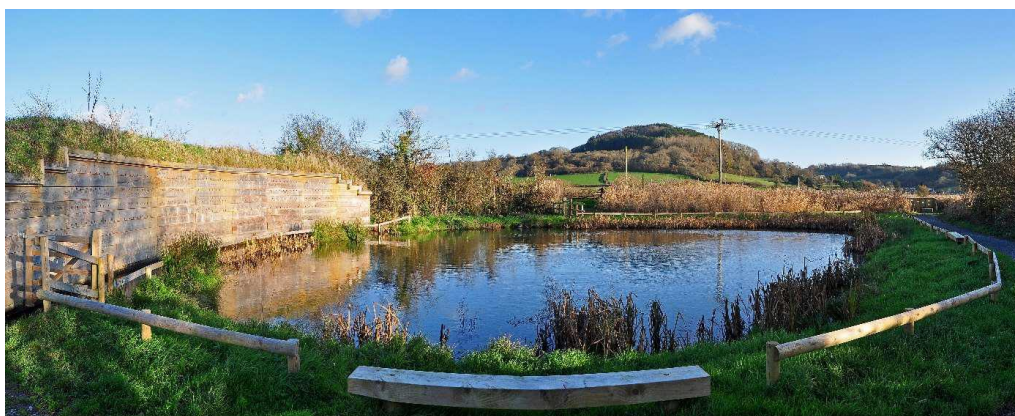
East Devon is an outstanding place. Everything we do aims to ensure that East Devon is a place where people want to live, work, visit and enjoy life.



*Littleham Primary School class Swim to Sea at Exmouth. © LED Community Leisure*

We are lucky that our district has such special green spaces and beautiful coastlines. We are committed to ensuring that this outstanding environment contributes to the health and wellbeing of our residents. Prevention is better than cure: we know that nature plays an important role in health and wellbeing. Our natural open spaces provide valuable opportunities for us to achieve many of our public health priorities, ranging from increasing levels of physical activity, to improved mental wellbeing and reducing social isolation. There are many opportunities for exercise on our land – through play areas, outdoor gyms and skateparks. These spaces offer us tangible opportunities to align with One Devon’s integrated care work and include the potential for increased social prescribing/health referral schemes.

We will work alongside our many partners to meet our shared goal of a healthier, happier and greener future. We will help to create and protect local networks of places that are good for wildlife and people. We will deliver this on our own land and encourage landowners to follow our example.



*Seaton Wetlands © EDDC*

Our Planners will work with partners to ensure the joined-up thinking needed to create this network of green spaces and avoid social and environmental problems. Streetscene, our Countryside team, LED Community Leisure, our Community Development Workers and others will involve our communities in delivering and deriving benefit from our green spaces and our coastlines.



*New cycle and walkways facilitate sustainable travel. © EDDC*

## Our partners

Across our services, we will work alongside many other partners to advance our evidence-based priorities. Our activities could range from signposting to appropriate services, to contributing to new strategies and policies.

We recognise that we cannot achieve all of our aspirations alone and that our work requires close partnerships. We will continue to strengthen these, by aligning and sharing knowledge, skills and resources to achieve the population health outcomes to which we aspire. We will maximise partnership working at a strategic level to identify priorities, extend reach, align resources most effectively to avoid duplication and respond to local need.



*Wreath Making session from a project in partnership with Devon County Council's Natural Environment Team. © LED Community Leisure*

Input from other agencies, local CICs, charities and other community groups is crucial. We will seek to develop our partnership activities to help achieve our public health objectives, and through a more joined-up approach to support effective use of local government resources.

See [Appendix 1](#) for some of our current partners.



## Engagement

Health inequalities are not caused by one single issue, but a complex mix of environmental and social factors which play out in a local area or place. This means that place-based approaches have an important role to play in reducing health inequalities.

We appreciate the enormous value that volunteers bring to their communities. To deliver the Strategy, volunteers will be key to keeping VSCE organisations going and supporting their communities to achieve the priorities we have identified.

We will help people to live healthier and happier lives in their communities by:

- Strengthening town- level, community-led initiatives by working with the voluntary sector to choose approaches for health and wellbeing and build social support networks.
- Enabling local communities to find their own solutions.

This could include social prescribing, seen as a way to connect communities with non-medical interventions and to find their own way to being healthier, happier and connected.



*Community Instructor with Stroke Survivors Group in Littleham. © LED Community Leisure*



# Monitoring and communicating

All councillors and officers have a role in implementing the Strategy and ensuring that council policies, decisions and activities are delivered in support of our priorities.

To ensure our work is accountable, we will monitor, review and report progress annually:

- We will develop annual implementation plans based on activities stated in service plans.
- Each annual implementation plan will outline SMART actions, with outcomes<sup>1</sup> and evaluation measurements.
- We will work together across services to identify health and wellbeing priorities in each annual service plan, enabling us to monitor impact.
- We will produce an annual review of work, reflecting on progress against services' objectives and reporting achievements along with any areas needing further work.
- We will work with our Comms team to share progress with officers, councillors and residents.

## SMART

<b>S</b>	<b>Specific</b>
<b>M</b>	<b>Measurable</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>Achievable</b>
<b>R</b>	<b>Realistic</b>
<b>T</b>	<b>Timed</b>



Feedback from mental health ambassador work in primary school. © HeadsUp CIC

<sup>1</sup> Outcomes = What difference did we make? Are we busy doing the right things to create change? As opposed to Outputs = How much did we do? Are we busy?

# 6 How our strategies and plans fit together

Our council's vision is to make a positive difference to residents' lives and our environment in East Devon. Learning from the pandemic, we believe that healthy people are essential for a healthy economy. Similarly, we believe that what is good for an individual's health tends to be good for the planet.

Our [Council Plan 2021-23](#) priorities are for:

1. Better homes and communities for all.
2. A greener East Devon.
3. A resilient economy.
4. A well-managed, financially secure, and continuously improving council that delivers quality services.

The Public Health Strategy supports our council priorities along with others of our strategies and plans. These include our [Poverty Strategy](#), [Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy](#), [Housing Strategy](#), [Leisure Strategy](#) [pdf] and [Climate Change Strategy](#), as well as Planning policies such as health impact assessment work. To implement these strategies, health and wellbeing activities appear in annual service plans such that a golden thread runs throughout council actions. We have already published our [implementation plan of health and wellbeing activities for 2023/24](#) showing activities by our own services.



*'Planning for a 20-minute neighbourhood': a planning concept that aims to create places where people can meet most of their daily needs within a reasonable distance of their home. © TCPA<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>2</sup> 20-Minute Neighbourhoods, The Town and Country Planning Association, 2021.

## 7 Summary and reflections

It is safe to assume that most people want to be in better health, but although people are living longer, many are often in poorer health.

We use the term ‘public health’ to cover physical, mental and social wellbeing of everyone in our district. We believe we have an overarching responsibility to consider health and wellbeing in all our council activities. Everything we do aims to ensure that East Devon is a place where people want to live, work, visit and enjoy life, while focusing on where there is greatest need.

East Devon’s population is diverse in its needs. Inequality can take many forms which impact population health, and to which we and many other organisations from across the system need to respond.

Our fundamental commitment should be to support individuals to have a warm and safe home and adequate healthy food, so that they can live their lives well in thriving communities which are empowered and supported to create strong social networks.

We cannot achieve our priorities alone. We will work across our services and engage with many partners to fulfil our priorities. These activities will be played out during the almost inevitable financial constraints which are impacting local authorities. We will adapt to new partnership opportunities as these arise and we will focus on activities which we are most able to influence.

Our new Strategy will help local leaders ensure that health is a better understood element of decision-taking. It is important to remember that these priority activities also align closely with our golden threads of poverty and climate emergency.

We can revise and update the Strategy as required; we will plan our actions then monitor and report our progress annually. We will do this in parallel with our Council Plan and other key strategies and plans.

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*Author: Helen Wharam, Public Health Project Officer, October 2023 updated February 2024*

***East Devon – an outstanding place***

## Appendix 1: some of our partners

Input from other agencies, local CICs, charities and other community groups is crucial.

### Some of our agency partners:

- One Devon Integrated Care Board
- Devon County Council [Public Health; Communities; Learn Devon]
- Town and parish councils
- Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service
- District councils – Teignbridge, Mid Devon and others
- Exeter City Council
- NHS providers
- Police
- Schools and colleges
- South West Water

### Some of the local organisations with whom we work:

- Action East Devon
- Active Devon
- Citizens Advice
- Devon Communities Together
- Devon Local Nature Partnership
- HeadsUP Mental Health Awareness
- Honiton Health Matters
- LED Community Leisure
- Open Door Exmouth
- Ottery Health Matters
- Parental Minds
- Project Food
- Seachange
- Sport England
- Woodbury, Exmouth & Budleigh (WEB) Community Health & Wellbeing Board
- Westbank, and many more groups.

## Summary of enabling actions



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