

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Community Grant Panel held at Council Chamber, EDDC Blackdown House, Honiton on 8 October 2025

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 6.35 pm

1 Declarations of Interest

None.

2 Public Speaking

None.

3 Matters of Urgency

None.

4 Confidential or exempt items

None.

5 Draft Community Grants Fund Policy

The Benefit and Financial Resilience Manager presented a new Community Grant Fund scheme for approval by the Panel, replacing three previous funding schemes but continuing to support voluntary sector projects and community buildings.

The new fund replaces:

- Action On Poverty Fund
- Community Buildings Fund
- Small Community Grants

The total budget stood at £204,842 over two years (2025/26 and 2026/27). It had been developed using feedback from the Voluntary sector (via Devon Communities Together), internal teams, and through a consultative meeting with the Panel in August 2025.

Structure of the Fund

- Bids can be put forward covering two aspects:
 - Small Community Projects (£300–£1,500 bid amount)
 - Community Buildings (£500–£10,000 bid amount). Capped at 50% of the overall fund.
- Match funding requirement had been removed for small grants and Community Buildings grants under £3,000
- Community Buildings funding was now restricted to rural areas, with exceptions for rural settlements within town parishes.

Administration & Decision-Making

- Managed by the Financial Resilience team.
- Applications scored using a Red-Amber-Green matrix.

- Grants:
 - **Under £3,000:** Officer recommendation presented in a summary report to the Panel for decision;
 - **Over £3,000:** Reviewed by officers for initial scoring, but presented with all supporting evidence and recommendation to be determined by the Panel on a case-by-case basis.

Regular updates of funding awarded, and outcomes will be provided to the Panel as appropriate. An annual report will also be presented to Cabinet confirming the spend, spread and scope of each project.

The Panel discussed the new policy and requested some additional changes and checks before the policy was presented to Cabinet:

- Including a procedure to check for existing grant application, in order to determine if a previous grant (for example during the first application window) had been used and provided the desired outcome, before any decision was made on a further grant during another application window. This was to ensure that funds were correctly used before agreeing to further funds to the same applicant;
- Include asking if the applicant had made any request under another name or community group in the previous three years;
- Clarify working days consistently through the document;
- Make clear in the recommendation to Cabinet that any future changes to the policy could be actioned by delegated authority by the Assistant Director for Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services in consultation with the Chair of the Panel
- Look at other options for expediting the decision process by means of online meetings and delegated authority to the Chair as Portfolio Holder Finance for those grants under £3,000.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that the Community Grants Fund Policy be adopted, with delegated authority for the Assistant Director for Revenues, Benefit and Customer Services in consultation with the Chair of the Community Grants Panel as set out in the Policy.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

S Hawkins (Chair)

J Loudoun

S Jackson

S Smith

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

Officers in attendance:

Sharon Church, Benefits Manager

Libby Jarrett, Assistant Director Revenues, Benefits, Corporate Customer Access, Fraud & Compliance

Debbie Meakin, Democratic Services Officer

Councillor apologies:

J Bailey

H Parr

Chair

Date: