

# **EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

## **Minutes of the meeting of Poverty Working Panel held at Online via the Zoom app on 24 June 2024**

### **Attendance list at end of document**

The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 11.00 am

#### **1 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 18 March 2024**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 18 March 2024 were noted as a true and accurate record.

#### **2 Declarations of interest**

There were none.

#### **3 Public speaking**

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

#### **4 Updated terms of reference for Poverty Working Panel**

The Assistant Director Revenues, Benefits, Customer Services, Fraud & Compliance introduced this report which set out proposed updated Terms of Reference, with a view to providing greater clarity and relevance on the role of the Poverty Working Panel moving forward.

**RECOMMENDED to Cabinet** to approve the updated Terms of Reference for the Poverty Working Panel.

#### **5 Template Poverty Working Panel Work Programme 2024-2025**

Members received the template work programme for the Poverty Working Panel for 2024-2025 and were encouraged to input into the programme, to shape the meetings of the Panel going forward.

#### **6 Timelines for updating the Poverty Strategy**

The Assistant Director Revenues, Benefits, Customer Services, Fraud & Compliance presented this briefing paper which detailed proposed timelines for updating the Poverty Strategy, noting that the current strategy ends on 1 July 2024.

It was intended to consult with the Poverty Working Panel and with the voluntary sector, to receive contributions to help shape the emerging new strategy.

Members discussed priorities for the strategy, and noted the report.

## 7 **Voluntary Sector Anti-Poverty Event**

The Chair outlined proposals to hold a Voluntary Sector Anti-Poverty Event in the autumn, to coincide with the first anniversary of the VCSE. This event would be an opportunity for networking between community groups and with key note speakers, as well as raising awareness of the updated Poverty Strategy and the work of the Council to reduce poverty across the district.

Members expressed unanimous support for the proposed event.

## 8 **Household Support Fund update**

The Benefits & Financial Resilience Manager presented this report which provided an update on deployment of Household Support Fund (HSF) 4, and detailed the HSF5 policy agreed by Cabinet on 5 June 2024. The report also set out future considerations, given that the future of the HSF beyond the end of September 2024 is unknown, and may not continue.

Discussion and clarification included the following points:

- The financial resilience team continue to work with residents to support them to reduce their outgoings and increase incomes, particularly where there has been a repeat need for emergency help.
- The team also work collaboratively with a range of agencies and different voluntary groups to access the right support for residents.
- Voluntary groups can be invited to register their organisation with the Devon Connect online database, a community hub which aims to connect people to their community and promote social action.

Members noted the report.

## 9 **East Devon District Councils Public Health Strategy 2024-2027**

The Public Health Project Officer introduced this item, outlining how the new Public Health Strategy and some of its uppermost priorities link to the work of the Poverty Panel. These priorities include:

- Cost of living crisis
- Mental health
- Unpaid carers
- Loneliness and social isolation (also known as social health)
- Dementia
- Homelessness, housing and indoor environment factors.

Members were encouraged to use the Public Health Strategy as a tool to help to influence the decisions they take in other committee meetings, which will in turn align with the Council's anti-poverty strategies.

**Attendance List**  
**Councillors present:**

P Arnott  
B Collins  
D Ledger (Chair)  
M Martin  
M Rixson  
S Smith

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

I Barlow  
K Bloxham  
R Collins  
C Fitzgerald  
S Westerman

**Officers in attendance:**

Sharon Church, Benefits Manager  
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:**

M Goodman  
D Haggerty  
J Heath

Chair: .....

Date: .....