

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 ourselves and community groups, listening and learning from our partners to help shape and inform our work, raising awareness of the work we are doing to help reduce poverty across the district including our updated Poverty Strategy. The day would include having key note speakers.

Members suggested to contact the Assistant Director on any feedback they had on what should be included as part of the event.

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: