

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Poverty Working Panel held at Online via MS Teams app on 24 November 2025

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 10.45 am

1 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were noted as a true and accurate record.

2 Declarations of interest

Cllr M Goodman: Minute 6; Affects Non-Registerable Interest: He will be applying for a grant for the Sidmouth Christmas Appeal.

3 Public speaking

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

4 Update on Anti-Poverty Financial Resilience outcomes for 2024/25 (to include details on pension credit take up figures, case studies, funding deployed, etc.) - presentation

The Benefits and Financial Resilience Manager presented an update on the work of the Financial Resilience Team for 2024/25. The presentation included:

- Details on the funding administered for the Household Support Fund 5 and 6;
- The Financial Resilience Team outcomes including case studies and details of the work the team have been doing in the community;
- Outcomes of the Pension Credit take up campaign carried out last winter in response to the removal of the Winter Fuel Allowance for those not on Pension Credit; and
- An update on administration of the Household Support Fund 7.

Discussion and clarification included the following points:

- The Financial Resilience Team comprises three full time members of staff. It is hoped to recruit to a fourth post by the new year to add management support; this post will cover a wider remit including community grants.
- The work of the Financial Resilience Team is steady but cases are more complex and the team's outreach work can lead to an increase in referrals.

5 Briefing on HSF 7 & Crisis Resilience Fund- verbal update

The Benefits and Financial Resilience Manager presented this item which was a briefing on the new Crisis Resilience Fund due to replace the Household Support Fund and discretionary housing payments from April 2026.

The update was noted.

6 Community Grant Scheme - verbal update

The Benefits and Financial Resilience Manager provided a verbal update on the Community Grant Scheme.

Discussion and clarification included the following points:

- The total funding is £204k with £102k available for the current financial year and then £102k for 2026-27.
- Applications will be considered by the Community Grant Panel with decisions expected in February or March 2026.
- Voluntary organisations without their own constitutions can apply if they have a host organisation and/or are working with Devon Communities Together.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

V Bonetta
M Goodman
M Rixson (Chair)
S Smith

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

I Barlow

Officers in attendance:

Sharon Church, Benefits Manager
Sarah James, Democratic Services Officer
Libby Jarrett, Assistant Director Revenues, Benefits, Corporate Customer Access, Fraud & Compliance
Andrew Mitchell, Housing Solutions Service Manager

Councillor apologies:

P Arnott
D Ledger

Chair:

Date: