

## Poverty reduction strategy - An action plan 2021 onwards

Objective 1 - Helping people on low incomes to maximise their household income and minimise their costs, building financial resilience and reducing indebtedness.

No.	Action	Service	Completion date	Narrative, performance measures and outcomes
1.1	Exploring the opportunity for developing a poverty dashboard that draws on data from a range of different sources to allow us to gather, understand and use the data to help shape policy and inform on future interventions	Finance	Subject to resources following Covid-19 response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Understanding of the different types of poverty and issues being experienced in different demographic areas of district.</li> <li>➤ Breakdown by Ward if possible to illustrate difference and rural poverty.</li> <li>➤ Dashboard that breaks poverty down into types; relative, absolute and in-work so that future interventions are based on needs of individuals living within certain areas.</li> <li>➤ Demographic areas of highest need shown on a map that can be used to help inform and target future interventions including hidden poverty.</li> <li>➤ Dashboard to be used as a measure on the trajectory of poverty within the District.</li> <li>➤ Relevant data provided in an easy to understand format to help inform poverty panel and internal departments on future interventions for supporting financially vulnerable households.</li> </ul>

No.	Action	Service	Completion date	Narrative, performance measures and outcomes
1.2	Working with partner organisations, such as Citizens Advice, schools, etc. to promote and reach out to those who aren't currently engaging but are financially struggling (hidden poverty)	Finance & Housing plus partner organisations	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Capturing data on where referrals have come from, e.g. schools, local charities &amp; support agencies, foodbanks, etc.</li> <li>➤ Breaking the cycle of repeated emergency support measures.</li> <li>➤ Feedback from partner organisations.</li> </ul>
1.3	Creation of Financial Resilience Team within Revenues and Benefit responsible for administering discretionary funds. Team to work in close partnership with other internal departments (Housing and Council Tax) to ensure that joint approach is taken to supporting residents experiencing poverty. Team to also work in partnership with other external agencies and organisations to ensure that residents are receiving necessary support not provided by	Finance	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Future financial resilience is achieved for residents living on low incomes e.g. repeat arrears in future financial years.</li> <li>➤ Numbers of residents requiring repeat support.</li> <li>➤ Average length of time taken to support residents out of poverty.</li> <li>➤ Type and amount of discretionary support used.</li> <li>➤ Number of referrals made to outside agencies.</li> <li>➤ Number of cases working in partnership with outside agencies/ organisations.</li> <li>➤ Recognition of rural isolation and digital poverty.</li> <li>➤ Recognition of poverty amongst older people.</li> <li>➤ Recognition of poverty caused by major life events/crisis i.e. disability, unemployment etc.</li> </ul>

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	East Devon through referrals and signposting			
1.4	Support Council tenants and other low income residents' households to access financial support, and provide advice on benefits, budgeting and money issues	Finance & Housing	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Income maximisation, minimisation of expenditure and budgeting support to help customers live within their means.</li> <li>➤ Number of residents supported to access financial support.</li> <li>➤ Number of residents provided with advice on benefits, budgeting and debt.</li> <li>➤ Number and type of interventions undertaken.</li> <li>➤ Advice on avoiding loan sharks and offering credit unions as an affordable lending source.</li> <li>➤ Environmental Protection team will continue to provide National Assistance Burials, making arrangements and covering costs for individuals who die without anyone to arrange the burial or cremation.</li> <li>➤ The Environmental Protection team's Pest Control service operates at significantly subsidised costs compared to private sector costs for the control of rats, mice and wasps.</li> </ul>
1.5	Support low income households to access entitlements to welfare benefits and continue to work in partnership with Job Centre Plus and DWP to support vulnerable households with the continued migration of	Finance	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Ensures that income is maximised for those who are experiencing poverty.</li> <li>➤ Number of households who have been supported to apply for and subsequently receive Welfare Benefits.</li> <li>➤ Using data to identify patterns and trends in future needs.</li> </ul>

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	claims from Housing Benefit to Universal Credit. Analyse and assess trends and patterns on claimant profile to determine future actions, interventions			
1.6	Operate a Council Tax Reduction scheme (working age) which strikes the right balance between providing the right level of support for those that are financially vulnerable whilst also recognising the importance of protecting council tax income for providing essential services	Finance	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Monitor and evaluate household data to identify patterns and trends in caseload.</li> <li>➤ Use the data to identify actions, appropriate interventions to help shape and inform policy and strategy.</li> <li>➤ The effectiveness of the scheme in relation to collection and arrears levels.</li> <li>➤ Ensuring scheme protects the most financially vulnerable and meets our equality duties.</li> </ul>
1.7	Promote the Real Living Wage and encourage our contractors and partners to pay their staff the Real Living Wage	Human Resources/ Services	September 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Measure progress towards the Real Living Wage year on year.</li> <li>➤ Benchmark against the Minimum Wage and the National Living Wage.</li> <li>➤ Document conversations with contractors and partners.</li> </ul>
1.8	Promote Living Wage accreditation to employers in East Devon,	Growth, Development & Prosperity	March 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Increase the number of East Devon employers that have achieved Living Wage accreditation to 100, of which at least</li> </ul>

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	including businesses, public bodies and voluntary and community sector organisations			<p>55 will have received direct support from the Council.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Number of employees working for employers that have achieved Living Wage accreditation.</li> <li>➤ We could support this via communications and through our business ambassador programme. Many of them will be our larger employers.</li> <li>➤ Discourage zero based contracts or where employees have low contracted hours as these have a big impact on how much people get paid/job security as we know these are factors that low income households are caught up in as its low skilled/low paid work.</li> </ul>
1.9	<p>Review the funding arrangements for Money Advice and how these are delivered to ensure they are meeting the Council's priorities in helping to alleviate poverty.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reducing indebtedness</li> <li>• Improving money management skills</li> <li>• Maximising household income</li> <li>• Addressing hidden poverty</li> </ul>	Finance	March 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ How the service is being delivered to reflect the make-up of the district – digital tools (apps, social media, and web), face to face, phone, etc.</li> <li>➤ The effectiveness of the service being provided.</li> <li>➤ Numbers of residents provided with debt, benefits and financial advice broken down by different demographic groups.</li> <li>➤ Number of debt referrals made.</li> <li>➤ Number of Debt Relief Orders applied for.</li> <li>➤ Number of Bankruptcy Cases made.</li> <li>➤ Number of residents attending budgeting courses.</li> <li>➤ Number of recurring cases of arrears after debt actions taken.</li> <li>➤ Number and type of money advice campaigns.</li> </ul>

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1.10	Implement new Breathing Space legislation that comes into force May 2021 that will need to be reflected in the way that we manage debts within the Council. This will include updating our corporate debt policy, implementing changes to our working practices and ensure contracts/agreements with external agents involved with the collection of debts are updated	Finance in conjunction with Housing & Environmental Health	May 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Capturing data on the number of residents that seek professional debt help under the 'Breathing Space' scheme and the types of council debts this includes- council tax, business rates, rents, sundry debts, car park debts, etc.</li> <li>➤ An initial review (3-6 months) from when the scheme goes live to understand how this scheme is working within the district and whether it is delivering against the aims so that we can assess and provide useful feedback to the poverty panel. This review will also help to identify further actions that we will need to take.</li> </ul>
1.11	Implement a common financial statement for capturing income and expenditure so that we have a consistent approach across all Council services for assessing income and expenditure, and exploring how we can work with partner	Finance in conjunction with Housing	Subject to resources following Covid-19 response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Remove barriers for residents in accessing support.</li> <li>➤ Providing consistency of approach across all Council services for determining financial support.</li> <li>➤ Will reduce timelines for determining financial support to residents as will only have to complete this information once.</li> </ul>

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	organisations and agencies (Citizens Advice) for sharing this information more widely (subject to GDPR)			
1.12	Review the rent deposit/loan scheme that the Council operates to better understand the effectiveness and whether the scheme could be better linked in with other discretionary funds to ensure that these debts do not lead to wider financial problems	Housing and Finance	Subject to resources due to ongoing response to Covid-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Number of rent deposits/loans that are repaid.</li> <li>➤ Number of loans requested that are supported via other discretionary funds.</li> <li>➤ Number and reasons for subsequent defaults.</li> </ul>
1.13	Review the use of Discretionary funds, (Discretionary Housing Payments, Exceptional Hardship Fund, DEFRA funding etc.), to ensure that funding in is working to the same goals in providing long term financial resilience and helping to alleviate	Housing and Finance	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Ensures that residents are supported to stay in affordable/suitable accommodation, whilst meeting statutory requirements.</li> <li>➤ Number of customers presenting with arrears or for debt advice after discretionary funds have been awarded to secure tenancies.</li> </ul>

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	poverty as other internal departments			
1.14	Support digital inclusion sessions for Council tenants and leaseholders, and older residents in sheltered housing schemes and more widely in the community, and by into training sessions already funded by Job Centre plus	Housing/Finance	September 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Numbers of digital inclusion sessions held in community centres.</li> <li>➤ Numbers of digital inclusion sessions held for older residents in sheltered housing schemes and more widely.</li> <li>➤ Outcomes for those attending sessions.</li> </ul>
1.15	Providing greater accessibility for our low income households through the development of our digital solutions including the online app	Finance	Subject to resources (including Strata) following Covid-19 response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Easy to access and complete using various electronic devices when applying for financial support.</li> <li>➤ How applications and numbers are being received across different digital channels.</li> </ul>
1.16	Work with partner organisations and local communities to develop measures to support residents experiencing economic hardship and poverty as a result of the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic	All services	March 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Expand the relationship with Citizens Advice and community &amp; voluntary groups to support residents.</li> <li>➤ Recognise the value of a strong community and voluntary group network.</li> </ul>



No.	Action	Service	Completion date	Narrative, performance measures and outcomes
1.17	Provide funding to voluntary and community groups for activity focused on reducing social or economic inequality, including funding for debt advice services and other activities that will help reduce poverty	Finance	March each year June each year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Main Community Grants budget is fully allocated each year to voluntary sector activities that meet Council's grants priorities.</li> <li>➤ Grant awards are monitored to ensure they deliver the outcomes set out in funding agreements - Summary report produced each year.</li> </ul>
1.18	Work in partnership with local voluntary and community groups to understand and address causes of food poverty, including developing a food re-distribution hub	Finance/ Growth, Development & Prosperity	April 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Budget agreed.</li> <li>➤ Premises secured.</li> <li>➤ Business Plan agreed.</li> <li>➤ Underlying reasons for referral.</li> <li>➤ The different types of wider support required and provided.</li> <li>➤ Number and reasons for referrals made to foodbanks.</li> <li>➤ Explore with our network of local food and drink producers through Gate to Plate to ensure any surplus/potential waste is appropriately channelled.</li> </ul>
1.19	Work with partner agencies and community groups to develop sustainable networks to support residents in fuel or water poverty to reduce their energy and water costs	Environmental Health	March 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Networks in place and operational by March 2021.</li> <li>➤ Additional performance measures and targets to be set once scale of network has been established and is in place.</li> </ul>

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1.20	Support partner organisations and community groups to develop sustainable activities to support low income residents to access the internet and develop digital skills	Growth, Development & Prosperity	March 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Numbers of digital champions providing support to residents.</li> <li>➤ Numbers of residents receiving support from digital champions.</li> </ul>
1.21	Work with local businesses to identify ways in which they might use their skills, capacity and resources to support the achievement of shared objectives around tackling poverty and disadvantage	Growth, Development & Prosperity/ Environmental Health	October 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Number of businesses and employers engaged.</li> <li>➤ Number and type of new corporate social responsibility activity undertaken by businesses and employers following engagement with the Council.</li> <li>➤ Support engagement and promotion of best practice.</li> <li>➤ Environmental Health Commercial team help to boost residents on low incomes who want to start small food-based businesses. The team ensure these start-up businesses comply with legislation in ways that do not require large investments, until they have proved that they will be able to generate income to fund the improvements they need.</li> </ul>
1.22	Lobbying and influencing Government on welfare benefits policy issues	Portfolio Holder & Poverty Panel	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Use lobbying to encourage changes at a national social policy level.</li> <li>➤ Engage M.P.s in debate on poverty prevention issues.</li> </ul>

Objective 2 - Strengthening families and communities, including supporting groups of people that are more likely to experience poverty, and community and voluntary groups working to combat poverty.

No.	Action	Service	Completion date	Narrative, performance measures and outcomes
2.1	Review the needs of the community and voluntary sector in building stronger communities, and identify where the Council can best provide support	Housing	September 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Conclude discussions with groups on the role of a CVS for East Devon.</li> <li>➤ Produce a CVS Service Level Agreement for discussion and agreement.</li> <li>➤ Map community and voluntary groups to develop a comprehensive database and the core services being provided.</li> </ul>
2.2	Review, develop and implement the Volunteer programme of activities, including holding an event to increase the number of people volunteering for local community and voluntary groups in East Devon	Housing	October 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Build on the existing volunteer programmes and link with our health &amp; wellbeing objectives.</li> </ul>
2.3	Provide a programme of 'community days' in low income areas of the district to: save residents money from disposing of bulky waste; encourage residents to have a sense	Housing	September 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Number of community days held in low incomes areas of the district (target 6 in 2021/22).</li> <li>➤ Number of skip days held in low income areas of the district.</li> <li>➤ Tonnage of bulky waste collected at community days.</li> </ul>

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	of pride in their neighbourhood; and encourage community engagement to help create sustainable communities			
2.4	Ensure that Cranbrook residents and neighbouring disadvantaged communities benefit from enhanced service delivery and improved physical, social and psychological linkages between the existing and new developments.	Planning + Growth Development & Prosperity	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Reduction in number of residents receiving unemployment benefits.</li> <li>➤ Prioritise investment in Cranbrook Town Centre – ensuring delivery of local facilities – including supermarket, GP surgery, dental surgery, early years child care, library, etc.</li> <li>➤ Provide employment skills support to enable disadvantaged residents are able to apply for jobs within local facilities (in partnership with JSP).</li> <li>➤ Work with RSLs to support disadvantaged households (e.g. Live West).</li> <li>➤ Use the poverty dashboard to identify the socio-economic make-up of Cranbrook to help understand the need.</li> </ul>
2.5	Use planning policy to ensure that new developments promote permeability, connectivity and accessibility	Planning	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Planning policies promote safe, legible, permeable, and accessible public realm.</li> </ul>
2.6	Ensure that the Council's Environmental	Environmental Health	Ongoing to March 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Raise awareness of the EIP scheme amongst residents.</li> </ul>

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	Improvement programme includes schemes in more deprived wards, including Littleham, Exmouth and St. Pauls, Honiton.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Seek and consider EIP scheme proposals from local communities</li> <li>➤ The Environmental Protection team have proposed new links with Housing officers to work more closely with our own tenants in conflicts with neighbours.</li> <li>➤ Our Community Safety Partnership Coordinator will continue to work with a wide network of contacts across the district, sharing information - most aimed at supporting families, young people and preventing harm or exploitation.</li> <li>➤ Our Community Safety Partnership Coordinator will continue to use social media to share key messages and opportunities around community safety themes.</li> <li>➤ Our Community Safety Partnership Coordinator anticipates a further grant from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for community-strengthening activities throughout 2021/22.</li> <li>➤</li> </ul>
2.7	Develop a collaborative, area-based approach to support communities with high levels of deprivation in partnership with a range of organisations	Housing	Ongoing to March 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Performance measures to be developed as area-based approach and initiatives are explored.</li> </ul>
2.8	Support an annual programme of events which celebrate diversity and promote community	Housing	Annually from March 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Successful programme of events delivered linked to each national or international event, including free events and events with free spaces for people on low incomes.</li> </ul>

No.	Action	Service	Completion date	Narrative, performance measures and outcomes
	cohesion, in partnership with local equality and diversity organisations			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Encourage attendance at events from all sectors of the community.</li> <li>➤ Pilot the use of podcasts to convey poverty messages in audio form.</li> </ul>

Objective 3 - Promoting an inclusive economy, by raising skills and improving access to a range of employment opportunities for people on low incomes.

No.	Action	Service	Completion date	Narrative, performance measures and outcomes
3.1	Explore opportunities to spread the benefits of economic growth across the District, ensuring that all communities have access to high quality skills and education provision in order to access employment opportunities and that the development of the new Local Plan is supported by a robust evidence base	Planning/ Growth Development & Prosperity	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Develop a Local Plan evidence base that identifies the needs for employment land across the district and make site allocations through the new Local Plan to meet those needs. This process should include discussions of where the LA should invest to improve access to employment.</li> <li>➤ Opportunities explored for anti-poverty considerations to be include in viability assessments for new developments. We would need a robust methodology showing the activities and measures to be funded are effective at reducing local poverty. The overall impact on development viability would need to be considered.</li> <li>➤ Opportunities explored to support “meanwhile uses” for land that is earmarked for development not necessarily an anti-poverty action. Can the council use revenue generated from meanwhile uses to support anti-poverty action?</li> </ul>
3.2	Ensure that the proposed developments in the West End of the District benefit both new residents and existing neighbouring disadvantaged communities by	Planning/ Growth Development & Prosperity		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ See comments at 2.4</li> </ul>

No.	Action	Service	Completion date	Narrative, performance measures and outcomes
	maximising local employment, skills and training opportunities			