

# East Devon District Council: Poverty Action Plan 2023-2024

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## Introduction to Poverty Action Plan 2023-2024

**Our vision: to make a positive difference to residents' lives and our environment in East Devon.**

East Devon is a prosperous area for many. It has a strong economy, driven by a combination of small businesses, agriculture, tourism, the service sector, and a significant cluster of hi-tech and bio-technology businesses. However, despite continuing growth of East Devon's economy, we have identified pockets of poverty, using measures which takes into account data on wages, pensions, benefits and other income. While some jobs in the district command high salaries, a significant proportion of households are living on low incomes or in poverty.

We are seeing increased levels of debt with many households taking on debt to make ends meet, leading to problems in prioritising debts and incurring high interest on debts. This has been combined with an increase in food bank usage. There are important safeguarding links with poverty and the impact on vulnerable households needs careful consideration and intervention.

East Devon's [Poverty Reduction Strategy](#) gives context, considers the impact of coronavirus, and identifies our five strategic objectives:

1. **Helping people on low incomes** to maximise their household income and minimise their costs, building financial resilience and reducing indebtedness.
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.
3. **Promoting an inclusive economy**, by raising skills and improving access to a range of employment opportunities for people on low incomes.
4. **Addressing the high cost of housing**, improving housing conditions, creating affordable warmth and reducing homelessness.
5. **Improving health outcomes for people on low incomes**, including access to good diet, health care and ill health prevention.

Teams across the council are working together and with partners, to fulfil activities summarised in the following Action Plan to support poverty reduction.

Our Poverty Action Plan for 2023-24 is based upon activities stated in section three in each of our [Service Plans](#).

## Service by Service – poverty reduction actions for 2023-2024

<u>Communications, Digital Services &amp; Engagement</u> <b>Summary of Service Objectives that underpin poverty actions</b>	Lead	Strategic objectives
<p>Purpose of Service: The team focus on external (and support internal) communications, corporate digital and data services, community engagement and ensuring the council complies with its equality obligations.</p> <p>Summary of Service objectives for 2023/24 that support poverty reduction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disseminate relevant information to residents, tenants and visitors.</li> <li>• Support the council in engaging with children and young people, the public, voluntary and community groups, staff, councillors, town and parish councils and others, including questionnaires, workshops, going into schools and events such as the East Devon Working Together Conference.</li> <li>• Manage and run council funding streams available to the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector.</li> <li>• Help support not-for-profit groups; advising on external funding, organising networking opportunities and advising on the structure of groups and organisations.</li> </ul> <p>Focus to promote and communicate actions identified in the council plan, poverty action plan, health and wellbeing and climate change throughout 2023/24.</p>	Communications Manager	2. Strengthening families and communities.

<u>Countryside and Leisure</u> <b>Summary of Service Objectives that underpin poverty actions</b>	Lead	Strategic objectives
<p>Purpose of Service: To provide a beautiful natural environment that conserves and protects East Devon’s outstanding wildlife, habitats and landscapes; to help make East Devon a more vibrant cultural ecosystem.</p> <p>LED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Swim to the Sea is starting in May 2023 and is planned to target children and older adults.</li> <li>LED team is planning free Health MOTs on June 12th as part of a Wellness Week promotion.</li> <li>LED team uses the Inbody Body Analysis machine at community events and are opening this up to community groups such as Exmouth’s Tri-Hards.</li> </ul> <p>Thelma Hulbert Gallery’s new ‘Young people inclusivity, Arts and Environment’ engagement programme for 23/24 will provide new dynamic and inclusive opportunities to engage with arts, culture and climate, responding to the needs of East Devon’s young people 7-25.</p>	Assistant Director Countryside & Leisure	<p>2. Strengthening families and communities.</p> <p>5. Improving health outcomes for people on low incomes.</p>

<u>Environmental Health</u> <b>includes Private Sector Housing, Climate Change and Public Health:</b> <b>Summary of Service Objectives that underpin poverty actions</b>	Lead	Strategic objectives
<p>Purpose of Service: To protect and improve the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities and protect and improve the environment. The Service focuses on improving quality of life, to influence decisions and to control a range of behaviours and environmental factors that can affect the health and wellbeing of people in East Devon.</p> <p>We have a key role in contributing to public health and wellbeing of our local communities in ways not available to other agencies such as NHS bodies. Our work is evidence based, to ensure that East Devon is a place where people want to live, work, visit and enjoy life, focusing on where there is the greatest need.</p>	Assistant Director EH; Public Health Project Officer; Principal EHO Private Sector Housing; Principal EHO Environmental	<p>1. Helping people on low incomes.</p> <p>2. Strengthening families and communities.</p> <p>4. Addressing the high cost of housing.</p>

<u>Environmental Health</u> <b>includes Private Sector Housing, Climate Change and Public Health:</b> <b>Summary of Service Objectives that underpin poverty actions</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Strategic objectives</b>
<p>To achieve this, we work with our communities and local partners to reduce health inequalities across East Devon. We recognise and place value on the very strong links that exist between behaviours that are: a) good for our personal health and wellbeing b) good for our environment and c) lifestyle choices that contribute to improving health and reducing poverty in our communities.</p> <p>Summary of some of our Service Objectives for 23/24 that underpin our poverty reduction aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect the health of the public and the environment and work to improve healthy lifestyles and reduce health inequalities.</li> <li>• Contributions towards delivering the actions in the Poverty Reduction Strategy and Winter Pressures Plan.</li> <li>• Assist the work of the Poverty Working Panel, e.g. by continuing to monitor and collate the council’s progress against the poverty action plan.</li> <li>• Support improvements in the energy efficiency of homes using a variety of grants, loans, education and advice to reduce fuel poverty and improve energy efficiency. Paying particular attention to the reduction in damp and mould in homes.</li> <li>• Improve the conditions in owner occupied and private rented homes to reduce risks.</li> <li>• Deliver the Financial Assistance policy to administer the Better Care Fund.</li> <li>• Liaise with others including voluntary/community groups e.g. to support access to healthy food and nutritional awareness. Could include liaising with Devon Food Partnership, championing healthy eating exercises/initiatives, supporting a community garden to grow produce, supporting community larders / food banks to meet anticipated increasing need.</li> <li>• Deliver a cost-effective Pest Control service to residents.</li> <li>• Utilise COMF grant (Contain Outbreak Management Fund) received via DCC on positive health outcomes - Link funding use with our Public Health and Poverty Strategies.</li> <li>• We will report on the number of national assistance funerals we have arranged for people who have died in East Devon with no one else able to make the necessary arrangements.</li> </ul>	Protection; Climate Change Officer	5. Improving health outcomes for people on low incomes.

<b>Finance, includes Revenues and Benefits</b> <b>Summary of Service Objectives that underpin poverty actions</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Strategic objectives</b>
<p>Purpose: Benefits team provide means tested financial support in respect of housing and council tax costs in accordance with prescribed legislation and a local determined scheme. We pay approximately £18m in Housing Benefits and have 3,600 claimants. We provide Council Tax Support of £9.2m to nearly 8,300 households. The service now includes Financial Resilience Officers to support the Council’s Poverty Strategy, working with residents on low incomes to build financial resilience and reduce indebtedness. The Customer Service Centre [CSC] team also support with implementation and administration of government support schemes – now to support residents with the cost of living crisis.</p> <p>Summary of Service Objectives for 23/24 associated with addressing poverty:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial Sustainability Model – processes involved need to be organised.</li> <li>• Poverty Strategy – to continue to develop the Poverty Dashboard to drive the Council’s response to help residents with the cost of living crisis, the development and approval of the Household Support Fund 3 and Discretionary Fund (working with the Poverty Panel) in Q4 of 2022/23 with support being given in 2023/24</li> <li>• Council Tax Reduction Scheme – currently a revised, more generous scheme with a 100% reduction being proposed for the top band is being consulted; the new scheme if agreed will be implemented leading up to 2023/24.</li> </ul>	<p>Assistant Director of Revenues, Benefits, Corporate Customer Services</p>	<p>1. Helping people on low incomes.</p> <p>4. Addressing the high cost of housing.</p> <p>5. Improving health outcomes for people on low incomes.</p>

<a href="#">Governance and Licensing</a> <b>Summary of Service Objectives that underpin health and wellbeing</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Strategic objectives</b>
<p>Purpose of Licensing Service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist our clients to run their businesses effectively</li> <li>• Contribute to the welfare of residents and visitors</li> <li>• Promote a vibrant and sustainable future.</li> </ul> <p>Decisions are taken which could have a marked influence on poverty reduction. Summary of relevant Service Objectives for 23/24:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to secure affordable housing (and other planning benefit) through planning and property transactions.</li> <li>• Provide timely advice and support in relation to site acquisitions / repurposing to support provision of affordable housing and related processes (internal with external resource where required).</li> <li>• Deliver a revised Street Trading Policy, being due for full review after 5 years.</li> <li>• Deliver licences and consents in accordance with adopted Licensing, Gambling and Taxi policies.</li> </ul>	Licensing Manager	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Helping people on low incomes.</li> <li>2. Strengthening families and communities.</li> <li>3. Promoting an inclusive economy.</li> <li>4. Addressing the high cost of housing.</li> <li>5. Improving health outcomes for people on low incomes.</li> </ol>

<a href="#">Growth, Development and Prosperity</a> <b>Summary of Service Objectives that underpin poverty actions</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Strategic objectives</b>
<p>Purpose of Service: The team combines expertise across a range of disciplines including habitat mitigation, infrastructure delivery and economic development. The focus is on achieving integrated social, economic and environmental outcomes and the delivery of sustainable development.</p> <p>Poverty activities planned for 23/24 not stated but implicit – with responsibility for sustainable growth, comes potential to have a marked influence on population health by ensuring that growth is both clean and inclusive, in this way helping to realise the Council’s objectives in terms of reducing poverty and carbon emissions. Some of these actions for 23/24 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide intelligence and input to the development of the new Local Plan, and lead on the development of the economic evidence-base for the Local Plan.</li> <li>• Lead the deployment of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural Economic Productivity Fund programmes.</li> <li>• Engage with and provide support to the local business community.</li> <li>• Support the inaugural Axminster Gate to Plate event on 7th October 2023.</li> <li>• Support local business growth and inward investment by strengthening EDDC’s active promotion of vacant/available employment units district wide.</li> <li>• Ensure delivery of inclusive growth and improved employment and skills outcomes for residents.</li> <li>• Monitor &amp; evaluate local economic, social and environmental impact of Innovation &amp; Resilience Fund (IRF).</li> <li>• Support the work of the Cranbrook Strategic Delivery Board, ensuring that a range of services and infrastructure are delivered in step with new homes.</li> <li>• Delivery of Cranbrook town centre.</li> </ul>	<p>Assistant Director; Delivery Manager; Economic Development Manager</p>	<p>3. Promoting an inclusive economy.</p> <p>5. Improving health outcomes for people on low incomes.</p>

<a href="#">Housing</a> <b>Summary of Service Objectives that underpin poverty actions</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Strategic objectives</b>
<p>Purpose of Service: To deliver a decent home for all residents of East Devon, the Housing Strategy 2020-24 sets out four key objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing Homes</li> <li>• Improving Homes</li> <li>• Improving Communities</li> <li>• Improving Services</li> </ul> <p>Summary of Service Objectives for 23/24 working to reduce poverty, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consult on and produce a new Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2024-2028.</li> <li>• Continue to meet increasing demand from homeless households and secure suitable temporary and permanent accommodation, supporting households who present with physical and mental health needs, poverty and other issues, ensuring they are able to sustain their tenancies.</li> <li>• Implement, monitor and review the new delivery model for the re-use and recycling furniture programme to assist residents with setting up their home.</li> <li>• Allocate properties efficiently ensuring a focus on the keys to keys process to ensure we are housing people quickly.</li> <li>• Implement the new Resident Involvement Strategy 2023-2027 to ensure all tenant involvement groups are set up, supported and given adequate resources.</li> <li>• Review our current Community Development work plan to clarify objectives, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Deliver projects to support resilient communities ( health, poverty, social, wellbeing, financial, employment, tenancy sustainment)</li> <li>○ Develop the Fairshare project working with Supermarkets in the district and Nourish to collect food from the supermarket, cook and freeze it, and distribute to people with an identified need. Aim to do more for rural areas and link with other work e.g. new applicants for Universal Credit who have limited income for the first six weeks.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Develop our existing methods of tenancy support work in order to pro-actively support tenants to maintain tenancies, e.g. to include budgeting workshops.</li> <li>• Deliver our sheltered housing service to ensure appropriate levels of support are determined and delivered for tenants in sheltered housing; including to:</li> </ul>	<p>Housing Solutions Manager; Housing Services Manager; Property and Asset Manager</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Helping people on low incomes.</li> <li>2. Strengthening families and communities.</li> <li>3. Promoting an inclusive economy.</li> <li>4. Addressing the high cost of housing, improving housing conditions, creating affordable warmth and reducing homelessness.</li> <li>5. Improving health outcomes for people on low incomes.</li> </ol>

<a href="#">Housing</a> <b>Summary of Service Objectives that underpin poverty actions</b>	Lead	Strategic objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Run a programme of measures aimed at tackling social isolation across our sheltered housing, recognising the increasing number of people suffering from mental health issues.</li> <li>○ Review outcomes of the work delivered via the Housing Mental Health Support Officer and implement any changes required.</li> <li>● Deliver new affordable housing, aspiring to build more homes for social rent.</li> <li>● Ensure our approach to damp and mould is robust and fit for purpose.</li> <li>● Ensure we have a strategic approach and action plan in place for providing homes for large families, especially those living in temporary accommodation.</li> </ul>		

<a href="#">HR Service</a> <b>Summary of Service Objectives that underpin poverty actions</b>	Lead	Strategic objectives
<p>Purpose of Service:  The purpose of the HR Service (which includes payroll, HR and learning and development) is to develop skills, policies and practices so that people are Happy Healthy Here in an organisation that is both supportive and legal.</p> <p>Many of the Council’s employees are residents of the district. Actions to support pay including the agreed Real Living Wage and pensions contribute to supporting productivity and resilience and ensuring the Council’s meets its statutory duties as an employer. Priorities for 2023/24 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Evaluate impact of Reward Review.</li> <li>● Scope and commence ‘Grow Our Own’ project to maximise apprenticeships, engage with local schools and colleges and develop career pathways, succession planning and talent management to support recruitment, retention and workforce development.</li> <li>● Introduce improved staff benefits offer, refreshed star awards and annual all-staff event.</li> <li>● Scope and begin to implement work to improve our recruitment approach.</li> </ul>	HR Manager	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Helping people on low incomes.</li> <li>3. Promoting an inclusive economy.</li> </ol>

<u>Place, assets and commercialisation</u> <b>Summary of Service Objectives that underpin poverty actions</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Strategic objectives</b>
<p>Purpose of Service: To deliver place-making projects across the Council’s own portfolio as well as through working with others, and to deliver the efficient and effective management of the Council’s assets to maximise financial and non-financial performance. Projects are for the whole community: we work closely with a wide range of groups from volunteers, Parish and Town Councils through to the business community.</p> <p>Summary of Service Objectives for 23/24 that could underpin poverty reduction, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support delivery of Leisure Strategy; deliver asset-related actions identified in Leisure Strategy and revisit existing stock condition data in context of recommendations from the Leisure Strategy.</li> <li>• Develop and deliver place-making strategy and associated development projects, improving and strengthening a sense of place and prosperity in the defining places of East Devon.</li> <li>• Provide officer and member workshops to increase awareness of place-making and to facilitate discussion of opportunities available within East Devon to enable place-making outcomes, if so desired.</li> <li>• Deliver Terms of reference and Place-making Strategy for Exmouth.</li> <li>• Deliver a Place &amp; Prosperity Fund and begin utilising.</li> <li>• Support our commercial tenants in introducing energy efficiency measures into the operation of their premises and their business activities through sharing best practice.</li> <li>• Stalled employment sites – Hayne Lane, Honiton, Colyford Road, Seaton and Harepath Road, Seaton sites.</li> </ul>	<p>Assistant Director Place, Assets &amp; Commercialisation; Project Manager Place &amp; Prosperity; Project Manager Place &amp; Prosperity (Exmouth)</p>	<p>2. Strengthening families and communities.</p> <p>3. Promoting an inclusive economy.</p>

<u>Planning</u> <b>Summary of Service Objectives that underpin poverty actions</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Strategic objectives</b>
<p>Purpose of Service:            To deliver good growth, thriving communities and environmental care, with a broader role than just a narrow regulatory function:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivering outcomes and stimulating growth in a cared for environment</li> <li>• Creating places where people want to live, work, invest and visit</li> <li>• Shaping places and stimulating markets</li> <li>• Having significant positive impacts on the physical and mental health and wellbeing of the community.</li> </ul> <p>Many Service Objectives for 2023/24 are seen to underpin poverty reduction, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress Local Plan through to a publication draft in accordance with stated timetable and with members' stated aspirations including zero carbon development, promoting walking and cycling, bio-diversity net gain, affordable housing, promoting a green and resilient economy and diversification of town centres.</li> <li>• Collect and spend Community Infrastructure Levy monies to deliver the infrastructure needed to support new development.</li> <li>• Work with and support Neighbourhood Planning Groups.</li> <li>• Determine planning applications for the expansion at Cranbrook and secure the range of uses needed to create the vibrant town envisaged by policy.</li> <li>• Determine applications for the expansion areas at Cranbrook to maintain a supply of housing plots and meet the aspirations for growing the town to approximately 7,800 homes.</li> <li>• Ensure that all new homes inspected by our building control service are built to appropriate standards ensuring that high quality homes are provided.</li> <li>• Ensure that new developments are required to deliver appropriate levels of open space and promote walking and cycling, to deliver better health and wellbeing outcomes.</li> <li>• Support and enable the delivery of self and custom build plots in the district.</li> <li>• Continue to apply existing Local Plan and neighbourhood plan policies and government policy to secure the most low-carbon, energy efficient new developments we can.</li> </ul>	<p>Assistant Director Planning; Planning Policy Manager</p>	<p>2. Strengthening families and communities.</p> <p>3. Promoting an inclusive economy.</p> <p>4. Addressing the high cost of housing.</p> <p>5. Improving health outcomes for people on low incomes.</p>

<u>Streetscene</u> <b>Summary of Service Objectives that underpin poverty actions</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Strategic objectives</b>
<p>Purpose of Service:  This Service affects every resident and visitor: providing opportunities for health and wellbeing and environments that help to make a positive impact on our residents and visitors lives, by protecting and improving a Greener East Devon and contributing to public health through the provision of sanitation services such as street cleansing, public toilets and recycling &amp; waste collection.</p> <p>Our parks, public realm, green space and play/outdoor gym provide free at point of access activity/wellbeing for our communities. The recently adopted Play Strategy also talks about the importance of neighbourhood play spaces, which would tie to removing the issue of transport costs for lower income families. The Green Space Plan similarly references the importance of green space access close to neighbourhoods. The workforce action plan commits to ‘growing our own through apprentices’.</p>	Assistant Director, StreetScene	2. Strengthening families and communities.

Helen Wharam

Public Health Project Officer

26.06.23, final v 25.07.23