

Meeting:	Combined Executive Member Decision Session
Meeting date:	03/03/2026
Report of:	Debbie Mitchell – Director of Finance
Portfolio of:	Councillor Katie Lomas Executive Member for Finance, Performance, Major Projects, Human Rights, Equality and Inclusion

Decision Report: Crises & Resilience Fund (CRF)

Subject of Report

1. The Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF) (“The Fund”) has been made available to local authorities (LAs) in England to support low-income households who encounter a financial shock and to support activity that builds individual and community financial resilience. This funding covers the period of 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2029 inclusive (“The Fund Period”). This includes specified funding for housing support.
2. As with the rest of The Fund, the Housing Payment element will commence from April 2026 and replaces Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs).
3. The Fund is classified as Local Welfare Provision (LWP) and could be used to enhance existing Local Welfare Assistance (LWA) schemes. However, it is not intended to replace existing LWA schemes, which play an important role as established discretionary crisis support mechanisms.
4. The level of funding for York is approx. £1.6m pa (£1,587k) and this includes the DHP element of £163k previously funded separately. The Household Support Funding was £1.8m with the DHP funding of £163k. This means in real terms the actual welfare support funding has fallen by a little over £363k pa and over £1m across the next three years.

Benefits and Challenges

5. The level of funding has fallen as set out at paragraph 4 above when compared to 2025/26. The prior year funding (2024/25) was £2.076M so the fall across the last two years considering DHP moving into the CRF is approx. £600k pa. More positively the Government has confirmed funding for three years as opposed to 'one off' HSF funding that allows for some certainty through to the end of March 2029.
6. The primary objective of The Fund is to both provide a safety net for those on low incomes who encounter a financial shock and to invest in building local financial resilience to enable individuals and communities to better deal with crises in the long-term, reducing crisis need.
7. The funding allocated falls within the definition of public funds, and those with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) are not eligible to receive support. However, the scheme is open to all residents not just those on Welfare Benefits.

Policy Basis for Decision

8. The new Council Plan, which was adopted in September 2023, contains four core commitments to enable it to deliver the vision for the next four years. This includes 'affordability'.
9. The commitment states - 'We will find new ways so everyone who lives here benefits from the success of the city, targeting our support at those who need it most, supporting communities to build on their own strengths and those of the people around them.'
10. The approval of the CRF scheme will contribute to supporting the commitment to affordability by helping residents with their ongoing cost of living financial pressures helping them to live better lives, participate in the success of the city and improving their wellbeing.
11. The CRF scheme supports the council's anti-poverty strategy specifically the three strategic objectives of:
 - Tackling Poverty Today
 - Preventing people from falling into poverty
 - Creating long lasting change

Financial Strategy Implications

12. This is a government funded scheme and does not affect the council's revenue budget or financial strategy. Effective use of this money will help support residents' financial resilience and potentially alleviate cost on the council's stretched welfare support services.

Recommendation and Reasons

13. The Executive Member for Finance, Performance, Major Projects, and Equalities is asked to:
 - Approve the councils Crises & Resilience Fund Scheme set out at Annex A.

(The reason for this is to help alleviate the ongoing cost of living pressures for financially vulnerable residents)
 - To delegate to the Head of Customer Finance, Risk & Insurance in consultation with the councils Section 151 the power to award or amend any financial support changes and awards in line with the Governments 3 outcomes and four strands as set out in the scheme in Annex A and Government scheme guidance at Annex B.

Background

14. This is a new welfare support scheme following on from 7 Household Support Fund schemes, covid support schemes before that all aimed at assisting residents with cost-of-living pressures. The scheme is funded through Government grant and has no revenue costs to the council. As set out at paragraph 4 the funding for these schemes has fallen over the years since the end of the Covid pandemic. The high-level details of the scheme are set out in the paragraphs below and in Annex A (Council Scheme) and Annex B (Government Guidance) of this report.

Crises & Resilience Fund Scheme

15. The CRF scheme is fully funded through government grant. The government has set three outcomes for the scheme over the next three years:

- Provision of effective crisis support
 - Improving individuals' and local communities' financial resilience
 - Bolstering community level support
16. The scheme has four strands:
- **Crisis Payment:** Providing support to those in crisis.
 - **Housing Payment:** Providing financial support towards housing needs, to those who face a shortfall in meeting their housing costs.
 - **Resilience Services:** Funding for services delivered by Authorities or external providers to improve financial resilience.
 - **Community Coordination:** Investment in activities that connect and enhance the local support landscape
17. The four strands reflect the way the current Household Support Funds have been operating for last few years especially in terms of building community resilience. As with the current HSF scheme the budget allocation has been flexed across the priorities.
18. The councils HSF schemes have taken a very Cash First approach with many of the grants provided going directly into resident's bank accounts. The government continue to support the cash first approach but have asked that local authorities provide support through request and taking a person-centred approach. This approach will see residents asking for support however the direct cash grants in prior HSF schemes reflected that many residents did not approach CYC or its community partners for help.
19. The spend on both YFAS and HSF in 2025/26 has been steady but within budget. This 'steady state' is also reflective of other community partners including the food bank. Whilst York continues to have one of the lowest indices of multiple deprivation there are still pockets of poverty and debt problems. The CRF scheme will look to continue to build our resilience services and community coordination to provide more holistic support for our residents considering all their problems.
20. The CRF will also look to replace the Financial Inclusion Grants scheme allowing community organisations to bring forward

ideas/schemes that will align in delivering the outcomes of the CRF as set out at paragraph 14.

21. As with the former HSF schemes the council will be required to provide statistical returns on where the money has been spent and how successful the CRF scheme has been. This is set out at page 67 of Annex B. These returns will also ensure that the council are complying with the government guidance.
22. As the CRF scheme runs across three years and will continue to be developed at this point only a notional budget has been allocated across the four strands. The budget will see nearly a 100% increase in what used to be Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) to reflect the housing pressure in the city caused by high rent and house prices. The request for delegation at paragraph 12 reflects the need to be flexible around where the budget is spent across the four strands both in year and across the three years of the scheme. The CRF will also continue to be monitored at Financial Inclusion Steering Group (FISG) which includes the councils most relevant Executive members. Table A below shows the initial notional budgets:

Table A

Strand	Initiative	Amount
1 - Crisis Payment	Discretionary application scheme - Emergency	£ 100,000
	Discretionary application scheme - Other	£ 350,000
	Food & Fuel Vouchers Scheme	£ 120,000
	Administration/staffing	£ 80,000
		£ 650,000
2 - Housing Payment	Ongoing discretionary awards DHP	£ 164,000
	One off - crisis payments to prevent homelessness and temp accommodation	£ 136,000
		£ 300,000
3 - Resilience Services	Community food Support	£ 20,000
	Warm Places	£ 40,000
	Talk money, WAM leaflets, Targeted Letters	£ 30,000
	Take up campaigns	£ 10,000
	Digital solution (LIFT)	£ 30,000
	Council Tax early intervention	£ 5,000
	Software Support	£ 10,000
	Community Advisors	£ 80,000
	Benefits Advisor	£ 40,000
	Revenues and Benefits scheme administration	£ 40,000
	Crisis and resilience bid fund - Resilience services, programmes and activities that support building financial resilience for individuals and local communities that positively impact on the CRF outcomes. For example Community debt advice, energy advice, benefits and budgeting advice, digital inclusion, employment support, advice for older people, disable people, etc.	£ 300,000
	£ 605,000	
4 - Community Coordination	Admin and coordination for partnership working and networks	£ 30,000
	Evaluation and resident feedback and involvement.	£ 15,000
	£ 45,000	
Total		£1,600,000

*This does not include the £250K YFAS fund

Consultation Analysis

23. The development, consultation and analysis in relation to the CRF scheme has been undertaken by central government. In terms of the deploying the scheme at a local level internal consultation has been undertaken with Communities, Revenues, and the councils Welfare Benefits Manager.
24. Externally consultation has been undertaken with the council's Advice York community partners, Citizens Advice York (CAY) and through the councils Financial Inclusion Steering Group (FISG). The Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) for the scheme is attached at Annex C.

Options Analysis and Evidential Basis

25. The development of HSF schemes to provide effective financial support to low-income residents has been matured over nearly five years. The learnings from these schemes both by the council and its community partners coupled with the central government scheme guidance has helped in developing a CRF scheme to be delivered locally.
26. The scheme (Annex A) reflects the learned experience from prior HSF schemes. It acknowledges that the solution is not just money but is about building individual and community resilience. This is a journey we have been on for a number of years and through better information using LIFT has accelerated in the last few years. The scheme is more nuanced towards a person-centred approach and trying to address all the issues of the resident where that is practical.

Organisational Impact and Implications

27. The implications of the scheme have been considered during consultation along with demand on internal and community resource and that there is guaranteed 3 year funding.
28. The comments from implication officers are set out below.

- **Financial**, the funding for CRF is direct Government grant there are no council revenue budget costs associated with delivering the scheme.
 - **Human Resources (HR)**, There are no HR issues with regard to establishing and delivering the scheme.
 - **Legal** *The decisions in this report do not carry legal implications for the council, as the Council is effectively 'passporting' the funds from central government to affected individuals. As such, providing the approved scheme is implemented in accordance with Annex A, the Authority is acting within its discretion.*
 - **Procurement**, there are no procurement activities involved with delivering the HSF7 scheme.
 - **Health and Wellbeing**, the scheme is there to provide support with food and utility bills which will directly contribute to better health & Wellbeing.
Poverty and financial insecurity has a direct and/or indirect impact on both physical and mental wellbeing and a negative impact on health inequalities. Supporting those residents at greatest risk through the CRF scheme contributes to closing the health inequality gap across the city.
 - **Environment and Climate action**, This report relates to the delivery of welfare support and will have no impact on the environment or climate.
 - **Affordability**, This report decision directly supports the 'affordability' priority.
 - **Equalities and Human Rights**, the paper has an EIA attached setting out any impacts on Equalities and any consultation that has been undertaken in designing the scheme. The guidance for what the money can be spent on is set by Central Government and the scheme operates within this guidance.
- Data Protection and Privacy**, Data protection impact assessments (DPIAs) are an essential part of our accountability obligations and is a legal requirement for any type of processing under UK data protection and privacy legislation. Failure to carry out a DPIA when required may leave the council open to enforcement action, including monetary penalties or fines. DPIAs helps us to assess and demonstrate how we comply with all our data protection obligations. It does not have to eradicate all risks but should

help to minimise and determine whether the level of risk is acceptable in the circumstances, considering the benefits of what the council wants to achieve.

The DPIA screening questions were completed for this report and as there is no personal, special categories or criminal offence data being processed for the options set out in this report, there is no requirement to complete a DPIA at this time. However, this will be reviewed where required, on the approved options from this report.

- **Communications**, there is likely to be a requirement on the Communications Service to deal with media enquiries both proactively and reactively in relation to this report.
- **Economy**, there are no direct economy implications associated with the recommendations in this paper.

Risks and Mitigations

29. There are no specific risks related to the CRF scheme other than the demand for support (as with previous schemes) may be higher than the funding provided. To mitigate this risk there are no direct cash grants to residents but all support must be claimed by residents. In addition the scheme runs over 3 years and any budget surpluses can be carried forward and amendments made to the scheme in future years.

Wards Impacted

30. All Wards are affected by this decision but in a positive way through providing cost of living support.

Contact details

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Background papers

Annexes

Annex A – Crisis and Resilience Fund Scheme

Annex B – Government Guidance Document

Annex C – EIA

Abbreviations

HSF – Household Support Fund
CRF – Crises and Resilience Fund
CTS – Council Tax Support
EIA – Equalities Impact Assessment
DWP – Department for Work and Pensions
UC – Universal Credit
HB – Housing Benefit
DHP – Discretionary Housing Payment
IT – Information and Technology
MI – Management Information
TPO – Third Party Organisation

MoU- Memorandum of Understanding
LWP – Local Welfare Provision
PDF – Portable Document Format
CFO – Chief Financial Officer
LIFT – Local Income Family Tracker