

MINUTES OF THE Cabinet Member Signing HELD ON Tuesday, 24th March, 2026, 11:00am - 11:10am

PRESENT:

Councillors: Seema Chandwani

ALSO ATTENDING: Kodi Sprott, Principal Committee Coordinator, James Straw, Benefits MANAGER, Chris Boylett, Head of Revenue, Benefits and Income

1. FILMING AT MEETINGS

The Cabinet Member referred to the filming at meetings notice and this information was noted.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were none.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

5. DEPUTATIONS/ PETITIONS/ QUESTIONS

There were no deputations, petitions or questions.

6. CRISIS AND RESILIENCE FUND POLICY, 01 APRIL 2026 TO 31 MARCH 2027

In October 2025, the Government announced the launch of the Crisis and Resilience Fund, which would run from 01 April 2026 to 31 March 2027. £1bn in funding had been made available to County Councils and Unitary Authorities in England. This report sought approval of The Crisis and Resilience Fund Interim Funding Allocation Principles : April 2026, which partially allocated CRF funding to enable continuity of existing initiatives that were previously funded by the Household Support Fund and the Discretionary Housing Payment grant respectively, and which comply with CRF aims and objectives.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet Member for Tackling Inequalities and Resident Services:

- Noted the Crisis and Resilience Fund allocation from the Government of £5,932,161, for the period 01 April 2026 to 31 March 2027.
- Approved the allocation of £2,470,000 of this funding to be applied as set out in Appendix 1.
- Noted that officers would bring back a further report to members with further proposals as to allocation(s) of funding and a full policy on the Fund's administration.
- Noted that this funding allocation was subject to the availability of government funding and would terminate if funding was withdrawn.

Reasons for decision

The Government through the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has provided funding to local authorities to administer the Crisis and Resilience Fund. It acknowledged that local authorities have the local ties and knowledge and are best placed to allocate funding according to local need.

The guidance for the Fund allowed authorities to determine how to allocate the funds, within the framework of the objectives and aims stated. This decision would partially allocate the funds, enabling a continuity of existing crisis and housing support. The spend was targeted to those who were most in need and was in accordance with the scheme.

The scheme would support residents over the grant period, and all funding must be spent between 01 April 2026 to 31 March 2029. However, the decision proposed by this report only authorises spend for the period 01 April 2026 to 31 March 2027, to cover the period whilst the full policy is developed.

The policy would extend support up to June 2026 to low-income households with children, who were eligible to receive free school meals, and who were particularly impacted by significant rises in the cost-of-living, by funding free school meal vouchers during school holidays.

The guidance required local authorities to include an application-based scheme to provide crisis support to low-income residents and encourages a cash-first approach. This policy proposed to achieve this requirement through funding the existing Haringey Support Fund. Decisions would be made based on the existing Haringey Support Fund policy.

Additionally, the guidance required local authorities to provide funding to provide additional housing support to households in receipt of either Housing Benefit or the Housing Element of Universal Credit who are unable to meet their rental liability. This policy proposed to achieve this requirement through authorising spend for decisions to be made as under the Council's existing Discretionary Housing Payment policy.

The Council would continue to work closely with the voluntary and community

sector to promote awareness of the application-based scheme and encourage residents from hard-to-reach communities.

The guidance allowed for authorities to claim administration costs which were reasonable for the delivery of the scheme's aims. This policy authorised administration spend on essential IT equipment, which was required for the effective delivery of the crisis support, and the costs for staffing required to administer both the Haringey Support Fund and Housing Support scheme.

Alternative options considered

Consideration was given to doing nothing until the full policy is developed. This was discounted as unviable as were the Council to do so it would leave a gap in provision, which would also contravene the DWP requirement to offer year-round crisis and housing support.

Consideration was given to committing all of the spend. However there was insufficient time to do the research, engagement and planning required to formulate and mobilise such a new policy before the start of the funding period.

CHAIR:

Signed by Chair

Date31/03/2026.....