MINUTES OF THE Cabinet Member Signing HELD ON Friday, 10th July, 2026, 2.30 - 3.00 pm

PRESENT:

Cabinet Member: Jo Kuper

29. FILMING AT MEETINGS

RESOLVED: The filming at meetings notice was noted.

30. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were none.

31. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

32. URGENT BUSINESS

There were none.

33. DEPUTATIONS / PETITIONS / QUESTIONS

There were none.

34. INTERIM 2026/27 CRISIS AND RESILIENCE FUND POLICY

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST MADE FOR THIS ITEM:

None

The Cabinet member was informed that the scheme would run until 31 March 2029, replacing both the Household Support Fund (HSF) and Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP). Responsibility for administering the fund had been delegated to local authorities, with Haringey Council allocated £5,932,161 for 2026/27.

It was noted that the CRF had four principal objectives:

- To provide crisis support to low-income households experiencing material deprivation.
- To offer additional assistance with rental costs for low-income residents unable to meet their housing liabilities.
- To deliver services aimed at improving residents’ financial resilience.
- To strengthen community collaboration and enhance the provision of advice services across the borough.

The report sought approval for a targeted investment package funded through the CRF, balancing immediate crisis support with longer-term measures to improve financial resilience.

It was also noted that the decision authorised expenditure against CRF objectives one, three and four, enabling the commencement of resilience-building and community collaboration initiatives. This was intended to complement expenditure previously approved on 24 March 2026, which had focused on objectives one and two.

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet Member for Tackling Inequality and Resident Services:

1. Noted the annual Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF) allocation from the Government of £5,932,161 for the three-year period from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2029.

2. Noted the expenditure of £2,470,000 authorised through the decision made on 24 March 2026.

3. Approved the extension of free school meal holiday vouchers until September 2026 at an estimated additional cost of £966,000, followed by a more targeted approach to holiday payments for households experiencing financial hardship, to be determined later in the year in accordance with paragraph 3.12.

4. Approved estimated expenditure of £1,742,338 for the expansion of the Financial Support Team, as detailed in the report.

5. Approved estimated expenditure of £200,432 to increase the number of crisis fund decision-makers by two Benefits Officers for a period of two years.

6. Approved estimated one-off expenditure of £30,000 for the development of a streamlined online application form integrating multiple crisis fund applications and a benefits calculator.

7. Approved estimated expenditure of £220,221 to fund a strategic community coordination role supporting the design, co-production and delivery of the borough's approach to tackling poverty.

8. Approved estimated expenditure of £206,357 for the administration of the scheme, including staff resources for Housing Payments and the year two cost of the Low-Income Family Tracker.

9. Noted that all costs were estimates based on current data and forecasts and could vary according to actual demand and other relevant factors.

10. Approved delegated authority to the Corporate Director for Environment and Resident Experience to manage the budget in accordance with the principles and criteria set out in the Policy and the CRF outcome measures.

11. Agreed that the Policy in Appendix A would be updated to reflect the recommendations approved through the decision.

Area of expenditure	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
Free school meal holiday vouchers	£1,416,000	£0	£0
Resilience services	£629,966	£842,945	£269,427
Housing support	£1,192,000	£0	£0
Crisis Fund decision-making	£73,500	£100,940	£25,992
Crisis and hardship payments	£550,000	£0	£0
Community coordination	£43,306	£87,150	£89,765
Administration	£422,057	£57,300	£0
Digital improvement	£30,000	£0	£0
Total	**£4,356,829**	**£1,088,335**	**£385,184**

12. Delegated authority for the allocation of the remaining year one CRF funding, estimated at £1,575,332, to the Corporate Director for Environment and Resident Experience, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Tackling Inequality and Resident Services. This also included authority to allocate year two CRF funding to cover the Easter school holiday period, if required.

13. Noted the ongoing development of an Anti-Poverty Strategy to inform future updates to the Policy.

Reasons for the decision

Haringey Council remained committed to supporting residents experiencing financial hardship. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) provided funding to local authorities through the CRF, recognising that councils were well placed to allocate resources in response to local needs.

The CRF guidance allowed local authorities to determine how funding was allocated within the framework of the programme's objectives. The DWP also expected authorities to invest in preventative measures as well as direct crisis support.

The decision brought the year one CRF allocation to £4,356,829, the year two allocation to £1,088,335 and the year three allocation to £385,184. Funding was targeted at residents with the greatest identified need and was consistent with the aims of the scheme.

External modelling indicated that a significant proportion of benefits available to eligible residents in Haringey remained unclaimed, with an estimated value of £160 million. While the report authorised expenditure for only part of the available grant funding, it supported the development of services intended to help residents access their entitlement and navigate the benefits system. Further updates to the Policy were anticipated over the funding period to reflect the council's Anti-Poverty Strategy, emerging evidence and changing local needs.

The Policy extended support to September 2026 for low-income households with children eligible for free school meals through the provision of school holiday vouchers. This represented the maximum period for universal provision allowed under DWP guidance. The council was also reviewing arrangements for holiday support from the 2026/27 academic year onwards, with the intention of introducing a more targeted approach focused on households at risk of financial hardship while supporting longer-term financial resilience.

The redesign and expansion of the Council's Financial Support Team were intended to increase outreach activity and community-based support. Extended operating hours for the financial support helpline were also expected to improve accessibility for residents.

Additional funding was allocated to increase the number of officers making crisis support decisions, enabling more comprehensive assessments and associated support to be provided.

Approval was also sought to improve the Council's digital application process, enabling residents to apply for multiple crisis funds through a single online portal and receive information about potential benefit entitlement.

Alternative options considered

Consideration was given to delaying implementation until a full year one Policy had been developed. This option was not pursued because it would have delayed financial support and reduced the intended impact of the CRF.
Consideration was also given to committing the entire allocation at this stage. This option was not pursued because the council's Anti-Poverty Strategy was still being developed and was expected to inform future allocation of the remaining funding.

Other options considered included:

- Ending all school holiday support after September 2026.
- Implementing a smaller expansion of the teams responsible for crisis fund decisions and one-to-one financial support.

These options were not pursued because they were assessed as insufficient to meet the level of financial support need identified within the borough.

CABINET MEMBER:

Signed by Cabinet Member ………………………………..

Date …………………………………