

**Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting**

Cabinet – 13 April 2026

**Report Title**

Crisis and Resilience Fund

**Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?**

Yes

**Executive Director Approving Submission of the Report**

Chris Paddock, Director of Policy, Strategy and Engagement

**Report Author(s)**

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**Ward(s) Affected**

Borough-wide

**Report Summary**

The Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF) was announced in the June 2025 government spending review as a successor to the Household Support Fund (HSF). It will initially operate for three years, from April 2026 to March 2029.

The new fund has broader aims than the HSF. Instead of focusing primarily on crisis support to vulnerable households, it puts more emphasis on building financial resilience and creating a more connected local support system. The CRF also incorporates Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs).

Rotherham's CRF allocation for 2026/27 is £5.2m. This represents an increase of around £300,000 on the combined HSF and DHP allocation for 2025/26.

This report sets out specific proposals for use of the funding in 2026/27 and a broad approach to determining the best use of the funding over the full three years.

## Recommendations

That Cabinet:

1. Agree provisional allocations of the CRF for the following areas of activity in 2026/27:

### **Crisis Support**

- a. £1m for an application-based crisis support scheme
- b. £1,402,600 to support families with children during the summer holidays
- c. £407,584 for Discretionary Housing Payments
- d. £1.7m towards the costs of the Council's Local Council Tax Support Top Up scheme
- e. £60,000 to local voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations to support vulnerable households over Christmas / New Year through a supplement to the crisis support service level agreement
- f. £20,000 to provide parcels of household items to be distributed via VCS organisations
- g. £18,000 additional funding for FareShare/food providers to meet increased food costs

### **Resilience Services**

- h. £370,000 for Open Arms Rotherham
- i. £90,000 to provide additional financial support to care leavers

### **Community Coordination**

- j. £50,000 to coordinate CRF elements, raise awareness, and improve data capture and referral systems

### **Administrative Costs**

- k. £81,699 for DHP administrative costs

2. Delegate authority to the Director of Policy, Strategy and Engagement, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to determine revised and final allocations for the CRF. This will include provision for other eligible actions in 2026/27 to ensure best use of the funding.
3. Delegate authority to the Director of Policy, Strategy and Engagement, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to approve amendments to existing service level agreements and approve new agreements where required, in relation to the allocations above.
4. Agree to receive a further report in December 2026 setting out specific proposals for future years of the fund.

## **List of Appendices Included**

- Appendix 1 Equality screening
- Appendix 2 Equality analysis
- Appendix 3 Climate impact assessment

## **Background Papers**

The Crisis and Resilience Fund: Guidance for local authorities in England (1 April 2026 to 31 March 2029)

**Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel**

None

**Council Approval Required**

No

**Exempt from the Press and Public**

No

## **Crisis and Resilience Fund**

### **1. Background**

- 1.1 The Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF) was announced in the June 2025 government spending review. It will initially operate for three years, from April 2026 to March 2029.
- 1.2 Whilst its aims are broader, the CRF replaces the Household Support Fund (HSF), which was first launched in October 2021 to support households adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 1.3 The HSF evolved from providing pandemic-related relief to offering cost-of-living support for low-income and vulnerable households during periods of rising inflation and economic uncertainty.
- 1.4 Primarily, it has helped residents facing financial hardship to meet essential living costs, particularly food and energy. Between April and December 2025, the HSF programme has:
  - distributed around 130,000 food vouchers during school holidays for families with children eligible for free school meals
  - contributed to the Local Council Tax Support scheme top up, supporting approximately 16,000 households
  - helped over 2,000 households to manage fuel bills through the energy crisis support scheme
  - provided financial support for 237 young care leavers
  - worked with VCS organisations to provide nearly 600 families with Christmas and New Year food hampers
- 1.5 An evaluation of Rotherham's HSF programme was carried out in 2025. Learning points from the evaluation are summarised below and have informed the proposed approach to the CRF.

### **2. Key Issues**

#### **2.1 CRF guidance**

Having involved local authorities and other organisations in a co-design process, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) published detailed guidance for use of the CRF in January 2026. This guidance was subsequently updated in March 2026.

- 2.2 The overarching objective 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. There is a specific focus on the outcomes summarised in the table below.

Outcome	Purpose
1. Provision of effective crisis support	To ensure timely, needs-based assistance for individuals and households experiencing financial shocks, including support for those who are struggling to meet their housing costs
2. Improving people's financial resilience	To strengthen financial resilience and empower people to manage financial shocks, reducing the risk and occurrence of crises
3. Bolstering the local support landscape	To strengthen local systems, joining up support services and ensuring there are clear support pathways

2.3 These outcomes reinforce the CRF's dual aims of providing immediate relief where needed, whilst also building the capacity of people and communities to avoid or mitigate future hardship.

2.4 Funding must be allocated across four distinct elements:

- **Crisis payment** – providing support to those in crisis
- **Housing payment** - providing financial support towards housing needs for those who face a shortfall in meeting their housing costs
- **Resilience services** - funding for services that improve financial resilience
- **Community coordination** - investment in activities that connect and enhance the local support landscape

Further details are provided below, based on the requirements and objectives set out in the government guidance.

## 2.5 **Crisis payment**

This will provide rapid, flexible, and person-centred assistance to those on low incomes who experience a financial shock, based on the following principles.

- **Broad eligibility and local discretion** - local authorities retain the flexibility to define local criteria and tailor support.
- **Person-centred, needs-based approach** - awards should respond to individual circumstances rather than rigid eligibility rules or blanket provision of support.
- **Cash-first model** - cash payments are preferred, as they offer dignity and choice, with vouchers or goods in-kind as alternatives.
- **Families with children** – after the current school year, support for families with children should not automatically be through the blanket provision of vouchers to those on free school meals. Relative need should be assessed and families should be directed to wraparound services to build their financial resilience.

- **Accessibility** - at least two application channels should be provided (e.g. online, phone, or in-person) and support should be easy to find.
- **No wrong door principle** - residents should receive assistance regardless of where they first seek help.

## 2.6 **Housing payment**

This will replicate and build on the existing DHP (Discretionary Housing Payments) model. It will ensure that households facing acute or ongoing housing pressures receive timely and targeted assistance to prevent homelessness, sustain tenancies, and reduce hardship linked to housing insecurity.

2.7 In the medium term, the aim is to integrate DHPs within the broader CRF programme, promoting coordination between crisis support, housing stability, and financial resilience initiatives.

2.8 Existing DHP arrangements will be maintained in years one and two. In year three (2028/29), all CRF funding will be brought together, with increased flexibility on the housing element, which will no longer have a separate allocation.

## 2.9 **Resilience Services**

A major focus shift within the CRF is the requirement to allocate a 'significant amount' of funding to long-term financial resilience building. What constitutes a 'significant amount' is not quantified in recognition of the differing local contexts across the country. Authorities are encouraged to determine what constitutes significant within the context of their local needs and existing provision of resilience services.

2.10 Resilience services are based around achieving the following outcomes:

- Increased savings
- Maximised income
- Reduction in priority debts
- Reduced need for emergency food parcels
- Reduced need for crisis payments
- Increased access to quality advice services
- Reduced experiences of material deprivation

2.11 Services that could be provided include community supermarkets or advice services, benefit application support, jobs-related support, enabling access to affordable credit and supporting financial education.

2.12 Local authorities are expected to work collaboratively with the VCS to extend reach and strengthen delivery. There should also be referrals from crisis and housing payment schemes to resilience services.

## 2.13 **Community coordination**

This element of CRF encourages local authorities to invest in the underlying structures, partnerships, and support pathways that enable effective

responses to crisis and help to build resilience. Essentially, this is about connecting services that are part of the local welfare system.

#### 2.14 Activities that might be funded include:

- enabling roles to strengthen partnership working and improve coordination across organisations, services and programmes
- improved communication e.g. user-friendly websites and targeted outreach campaigns
- digital tools that help to map activity or support referrals and service integration
- costs of service design and co-production
- co-location of services
- capacity building for delivery partners

#### 2.15 **Guidance summary**

In summary, the CRF guidance emphasises the following:

- A person-centred approach that allows for dignity and flexibility.
- An increased focus on outcomes and addressing underlying needs.
- Integration of services within a single delivery framework offering easy access to support.
- Improved coordination and strong collaboration with the VCS.

#### 2.16.1 **HSF evaluation**

Last year, the Council carried out an evaluation of HSF activity in Rotherham. This has provided valuable insights into what works well in delivering cost-of-living support, as well as areas for improvement in future programmes. Key findings included:

#### 2.16.2 • **Building on existing systems enhances efficiency**

Utilising established systems ensures continuity, simplifies delivery, reduces administrative burden, and enables residents to access support more easily. Integrating new initiatives into familiar frameworks – e.g. the energy crisis support scheme - also helps to scale interventions efficiently and maintain consistency.

#### 2.16.3 • **Flexibility and collaboration strengthen delivery**

Flexibility and collaboration are key enablers of effective implementation. The Christmas food hampers initiative demonstrated how partnership working, particularly with the VCS, can expand reach. VCS partners are instrumental in engaging hard-to-reach groups, especially individuals who may distrust statutory bodies.

#### 2.16.4 • **Raising public awareness is crucial**

While existing programmes have been effective, there is a concern that many eligible households remain unaware of the support available. This is particularly true for individuals without internet access or those disconnected from formal communication channels.

Improving public awareness through more proactive, community-based outreach is essential to ensure equitable access. Future delivery models should prioritise clear communication strategies, utilising trusted community networks, local media, and face-to-face engagement to ensure that information reaches those who need it most.

2.16.5 • **Addressing root causes, not just symptoms**

Stakeholder feedback emphasised that while HSF interventions have been vital, they often address the symptoms of financial crisis rather than its root causes.

Greater emphasis should be placed on preventive and capacity-building measures, such as skills development, financial literacy, and pathways to employment, that reduce dependency on crisis support.

2.16.6 • **The need for a more integrated welfare system**

The evaluation highlighted the fragmented nature of some local welfare provision. For example, the DWP currently cannot make direct referrals to food banks, creating unnecessary barriers for those in need. This lack of interconnectivity forces individuals to navigate a complex and often confusing network of services.

A more integrated and seamless system, where agencies share information and coordinate interventions, would enable more comprehensive and user-friendly support for vulnerable households.

2.16.7 • **Strengthening data and evidence systems**

Consistent data capture and management is essential for effective programme delivery and evaluation. Current monitoring arrangements vary across schemes, making it difficult to assess overall impact or identify gaps.

Introducing standardised and centralised data collection would improve coordination, enhance the targeting of beneficiaries, and provide a stronger evidence base to inform future policy and funding decisions.

2.17 **Summary**

Informed by the CRF guidance and the findings from the HSF evaluation, it is proposed that the following principles inform the design and implementation of Rotherham's CRF programme over the three years:

- Build on what has worked well, utilising existing systems and interventions where they enable effective support to be provided in an efficient way.
- Aim to gradually shift resources from primarily crisis interventions to resilience building and integrated community-based support in line with government guidance i.e. addressing causes rather than symptoms.

- Improved monitoring and data management to inform an evidence-based approach - measure improved outcomes and impact as well as monitoring outputs.
- Ensure there is a strong emphasis on accessibility supported by awareness-raising, outreach, and improved referral systems – a ‘no wrong door’ approach.
- Co-design the programme with partners and communities wherever possible.
- Seek greater alignment of programmes and resources geared towards addressing crisis and building resilience.

## 2.18 **Local welfare system**

It is recognised that a range of advice and support services – ‘resilience services’ in the context of the CRF - are already operating in Rotherham. This includes Council services such as the financial inclusion team and money and benefits advice service, and many VCS services provided by organisations such as Citizens Advice Rotherham, Rotherham Federation and Age UK Rotherham.

2.19 The Council currently provides an annual advice services grant of £240,000 per year to Citizens Advice Rotherham. This is a three-year agreement ending in March 2027 and has been augmented with funding for immigration (£20,000 per annum in 2025/26 and 2026/27) and pension credits advice (£38,000 per annum in 2025/26 and 2026/27). Age UK Rotherham also receive £58,000 per annum to provide pension credits advice to residents.

2.20 The Open Arms Rotherham project, which has been operating in libraries and other community venues since 2022, has a particular focus on supporting residents from a financial inclusion or resilience perspective. This was funded via the UK Shared Prosperity Fund until the end of March 2026.

2.21 In addition to these, the Council has developed a model of providing crisis support to people in communities, which is VCS-led but underpinned by the Council. The Council’s crisis support contract with FareShare Yorkshire, Voluntary Action Rotherham and Laser Credit Union (a total of £108,000 in 2025/26) includes the provision of crisis loans as well as food supplies for local foodbanks and community supermarkets. This three-year agreement ends in March 2027.

2.22 Further support is provided through Food Works. The Council is providing £30,000 per year to this initiative from April 2026, initially to establish ten ‘Just Meals’ hubs across Rotherham. The hubs offer affordable ready meals made from quality surplus ingredients, helping residents stretch budgets while cutting food waste.

2.23 It should also be noted that employment support services are part of the overall picture of available support. Under the overarching Pathways to Work programme, the Council provides £700,000 per year for Employment Solutions and £88,000 for Supported Employment, which helps residents with autism, ADHD or learning disabilities. This is combined with government funding for the Economic Inactivity Trailblazer (£1.7 million) and

Connect to Work (£475,000). Altogether, the programme supported 1,096 residents in 2025/26, helping 224 people into sustained employment and delivering 315 training interventions.

- 2.24 Other support provided by the Council includes, but is not limited to:
- Childcare support and vouchers, including improved take up of free childcare for two-year-olds
  - Family hubs offering neighbourhood-based support for new parents
  - Healthy Holidays programme providing free activities and meals for eligible children
  - School uniform vouchers
  - Rothercard scheme offering discounts for some Council services and leisure centre activities
- 2.25 Whilst the CRF guidance expects local authorities to use a significant amount of their total allocation on resilience services, it also acknowledges that areas will have different contexts and levels of existing provision. In year one of the CRF, the proposed approach is to utilise the above and other existing support services rather than using the limited funding to create new resilience services.
- 2.26 It is noted that much of the support delivered by VCS organisations relies on short-term funding, which creates challenges for the stability and sustainability of the local welfare system.
- 2.27 There is also a risk that referring crisis payments scheme applicants (see paragraph 3.4 below) to Council and external support services will create capacity issues. This will be monitored and assessed as the CRF programme is implemented, including by continuing to work closely with VCS partners.
- 2.28 The current global context has created further uncertainty and risk to the successful implementation of CRF. Alongside the deployment of CRF, the Council will continue to monitor the impact of increased energy costs and wider inflation on the cost of living and financial resilience of residents.

### **3. Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 3.1 The preferred option is outlined below. This is informed by previous experience of 'what works' in the implementation of the HSF, findings from the HSF evaluation, and the CRF guidance.
- 3.2 The recommended allocations are for the first year of funding only. The rationale is that 2026/27 will be a transitional year, allowing more time to assess levels of need and the effectiveness of interventions. This will also enable the Council to work with VCS partners to co-design proposals for years two and three. It also aligns with the timescale to undertake a co-design process for the provision of advice services and crisis support from April 2027.

3.3 The specific year one (2026/27) proposals are:

### **Crisis support**

#### 3.4 **Crisis Support Fund - £1m**

In line with the CRF guidance, the proposed allocation will allow for an application-based crisis payments scheme offering support to people facing a financial shock or crisis. This will adapt the energy crisis scheme funded via the HSF. Crucially, applicants will receive referrals to support services to help them in addressing underlying issues with a view to increasing their financial resilience.

The CRF guidance requires that a crisis payments scheme be made available throughout the financial year. The proposed scheme will offer fixed payment amounts linked to the nature of the financial crisis and repeat awards will only be provided in exceptional circumstances. This will help to ensure that the funding allocation is sufficient to last for twelve months. However, the Council will need to close the scheme once funding from the CRF has been fully allocated and re-open the scheme in the new financial year.

It is envisaged that the risk of closing the scheme can be mitigated by the payment structure and payment values, though on a discretionary demand-led scheme such as this, there is an inherent risk that the funding may be exhausted before the end of the financial year.

The proposed scheme will look to support households that have been faced with a sudden financial crisis situation. The scheme will allow the Council to review and assess each claimant's situation, potentially provide a payment to contribute towards the financial crisis, and provide referrals into support services to help in addressing any underlying issues.

There will be two tiers to the payments: £80 for contributions towards financial crisis events such as an accident or health emergency; and £200 for contribution towards failure of white goods or where people are unable to pay their fuel bills. These examples are not exhaustive and cases will be assessed on their own merits.

All applicants to the Crisis Support Fund will also be signposted to other support – i.e. resilience services – to help them address any underlying issues.

#### 3.5 **Targeted support for families with children - £1,402,600**

The CRF guidance states that the blanket provision of vouchers/payments to those on free school meals is not necessarily the most effective way of supporting families in crisis, as some free school meal eligible families may not routinely need crisis support during every school holiday.

Authorities are also expected to use 'a significant amount' of their CRF allocation on resilience services, whereas the current holiday voucher scheme would be classed as crisis payments.

That being the case, there is insufficient funding available to continue the holiday voucher scheme previously provided via the HSF. This scheme will therefore be discontinued after the Easter holidays.

The allocation above will provide for a one-off payment of £95 to support free school meal eligible families with the costs of the summer holidays.

As part of developing proposals for years two and three of the CRF, consideration will be given as to how targeted support for families with children could be provided. This will take into account other support for low-income families with children, particularly Healthy Holidays (funded through the government's Holiday Activities and Food programme). In 2026/27, the Council has invested an additional £350,000 in the Healthy Holidays programme. This is expected to create an additional 10,000 free places for children to enjoy a range of holiday activities and receive nutritious meals.

**3.6 Discretionary housing payments - £407,584**

This will continue to offer application-based support for people who need short-term help with their housing costs.

**3.7 Council Tax Support Top Up Scheme - £1,700,000**

To reflect the ongoing pressure on household budgets due to high inflation and energy prices, the Council agreed in March 2026 to extend the Local Council Tax Support Top Up scheme into 2026/27.

As in previous years, the scheme will provide an additional award on top of the 2026/27 support to working age claimants provided via the Council's Local Council Tax Support scheme. Based on current caseloads, this is expected to provide additional support to at least 14,400 households. This means that where a claimant has a Council Tax bill of £131.44 or less, their bill will be reduced to zero (this currently applies to around 11,000 households).

The estimated scheme costs are between £1.7m and £1.9m and will be funded by £1.7m from the CRF allocation, with the remaining £200,000 funded through the Local Council Tax Support Grant reserve. The actual cost will not be known until the end of the 2026/27 financial year.

**3.8 Christmas hampers - £60,000**

This will continue the VCS-delivered initiative providing food hampers to vulnerable households over Christmas and the New Year. Based on previous allocations, it is estimated that this allocation will enable around 600 hampers to be provided.

Consistent with how this has been administered previously, it is proposed that this would be facilitated through a supplement to the crisis support service level agreement (SLA).

3.9 **Wider household essentials support - £20,000**  
This will maintain – at a reduced level – a supply of non-food essential items (e.g. cleaning or personal hygiene products) to vulnerable households, distributed primarily through local food banks and social supermarkets. This would be facilitated through a supplement to the crisis support SLA.

3.10 **Food in crisis – £18,000**  
Additional funding to cover the increased cost of food as part of the Council's food in crisis contract with FareShare Yorkshire and local providers. This would be facilitated through a supplement to the crisis support SLA.

### **Resilience services**

3.11 **Open Arms Rotherham - £370,000**  
Open Arms Rotherham is a community-based project delivered by VCS partners. It offers regular drop-in sessions in local libraries focusing on financial support in the context of cost-of-living pressures.

As an existing, VCS-led project with an established presence in local communities, Open Arms reflects several of the key elements of success highlighted by the HSF evaluation.

In 2026/27, the intention is to include sessions in local foodbanks as well as libraries.

3.12 **Support for care leavers - £90,000**  
This proposal continues the HSF scheme, providing financial support to make it easier for young people leaving foster or local authority care to live independently.

### **Community coordination**

3.13 **Community Coordination - £50,000**  
The HSF evaluation indicates that while existing programmes have been effective, there is concern that many people remain unaware of the support available. Providing dedicated resources within this element will help to raise awareness of the available support, as well as joining up services and improving referral systems.

3.14 **Administration – £81,699**  
As was the case with the HSF, it is proposed to minimise administrative costs in order to prioritise support for residents.

There is a specific allocation of £81,699 for DHP administrative costs. For the wider CRF programme, administrative costs will be absorbed by the Council.

3.15 **Balance of spend**  
It is likely that actual spend will vary from that allocated to specific uses dependent on demand. It is proposed that to ensure full spend for the year,

any balancing sums be applied through the Crisis Support Fund.

### 3.16 **Other options**

Alternative options are summarised below.

### 3.17 **Continue with the current HSF programme**

Whilst the evaluation found that several aspects of HSF delivery are working well, the CRF signals a change of focus, including activity across several defined elements (see paragraph 2.4 above). For that reason, continuing with the current programme in its entirety is not recommended, as this would not be in accordance with government guidance.

### 3.18 **Equal splits across CRF elements**

Another option is to immediately introduce approximately equal allocations across the various elements of the fund. For year one at least, it is felt that a significant – and abrupt – reduction in current ‘crisis’ interventions to enable a substantial increase in resilience services or community coordination risks pushing people into crisis. This would obviously be counter-productive to the aims of the CRF.

## 4. **Consultation on proposal**

4.1 Officers in relevant Council services, along with VCS partners, have been engaged in developing the approach to the use of this funding allocation.

## 5. **Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

5.1 Arrangements are being put in place to implement the range of support measures so that residents can begin to access the benefits as soon as possible. In particular, multiple teams are working to adapt the energy crisis support scheme process to ensure that the new crisis support fund is in place following Cabinet approval.

5.2 The CRF programme will be overseen by the Policy, Strategy and Engagement directorate.

## 6. **Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications**

6.1 The value of the Crisis and Resilience Fund grant has been confirmed for 2026/27, with an allocation for Rotherham of £5.2million. The proposed spend detailed above reflects this allocation and is in accordance with the grant terms and conditions. The grant provides flexibility to local authorities on how the fund should be administered, in line with the guidance provided, though progress on spend will need to be monitored to ensure that government requirements are met.

6.2 Spend will be closely monitored as part of management of the CRF programme across the various elements to ensure that the overall grant allocation is not exceeded. As set out in the report, the Local Council Tax Support Top Up scheme may require £200,000 of additional funding from

reserves (Local Council Tax Support Grant) for this demand-led element. This will be closely monitored through the financial year.

- 6.3 There are no direct procurement implications arising from the recommendations detailed in the report. Where support is being provided via third party organisations, this is being facilitated via grant agreements, which are outside the scope of procurement legislation. If there is a need to enter into contracts for goods/services to support this delivery, this must be undertaken in line with both the Council's own Financial and Procurement Procedure Rules (FPPR's) and relevant procurement legislation (namely the Procurement Act 2023 or the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, whichever is applicable).

## **7. Legal Advice and Implications**

- 7.1 The recommended proposals are in accordance with the conditions of use of the fund. Further, the scheme is consistent with relevant public law principles, in particular it is lawful, fair and rational.

- 7.2 The Council can support this type of local welfare provision under the "Local authority's general power of competence", as set out in S.1 of the Localism Act 2011 (c. 20). Further, local authorities have the ability to act in this area under powers contained in other legislation, for example, section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 enables local authorities to provide financial assistance to any individual.

## **8. Human Resources Advice and Implications**

- 8.1 There are no direct HR implications associated with the recommendations in this report.

## **9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

- 9.1 The recommended use of the Crisis and Resilience Fund includes support for families with children, as well as targeted support for care leavers. Whilst still substantial, the level of dedicated support for families with children is reduced from previous HSF allocations due to a change in the government guidance.

## **10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications**

- 10.1 The objectives of the use of the grant and targeting towards vulnerable households, including families with children, will contribute to addressing economic and social inequalities.
- 10.2 Equalities data will be collected as part of administering the programme of support. An equality analysis has been completed and is appended.

## **11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change**

- 11.1 There are no significant implications for CO2 emissions or climate change.

## 12. Implications for Partners

- 12.1. Partner organisations, particularly VCS organisations, are a crucial part of the local welfare system. As part of the proposals above, VCS organisations will be involved in both providing direct support to those in financial crisis as well as helping to build people's resilience by addressing the underlying causes of financial crisis.

## 13. Risks and Mitigation

- 13.1 A key risk relates to the new crisis support fund/crisis payments scheme. It is hard to anticipate the level of demand for this scheme, which the CRF guidance makes clear should aim to be available all year round.
- 13.2 To mitigate this, as described in section 3.4 above, the scheme will have fixed payment amounts and limited access to repeat awards. A case management system will be used to monitor applications and decisions, including the volume of awards and the types of crisis situation applicants are experiencing. This will enable the scheme to adapt and respond to demand.
- 13.3 A further risk is that the proposals do not reflect a 'significant' investment in resilience services, as envisaged in the guidance. As described in paragraphs 2.18 to 2.28 above, the initial approach is to mainly utilise the wide range of existing support services. This will be reviewed over the course of 2026/27, working with relevant Council teams and VCS partners.

## 14. Accountable Officers

Fiona Boden, Head of Policy Performance and Intelligence

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers:

	<b>Named Officer</b>	<b>Date</b>
Chief Executive	John Edwards	27/03/26
Service Director, Financial Services (Deputy S.151 Officer)	Rob Mahon	23/03/26
Service Director of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Phil Horsfield	23/03/26

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