
Crisis and Resilience Fund

Overview Select Committee

Decision to be taken by: N/A

Date of meeting: 8th July 2026

Lead director/officer: Amy Oliver, Director of Finance

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Cory Laywood, Head of Revenues Benefits & Transactional Finance
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- Report version number: 1

1. Summary

- 1.1. This report provides an overview of the Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF) that replaces the Household Support Fund (HSF).
- 1.2. The CRF aims to provide a more stable, long-term approach to tackling poverty. While HSF provided short-term, reactive cost-of-living help, the CRF runs for three years (until March 2029) and focuses on immediate financial crisis support alongside building long-term financial resilience. The scheme replaces both HSF and Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs).

2. Recommended actions/decision

- 2.1. The Overview Select Committee is recommended to note the report and make comments to the Director of Finance and the Executive as they wish.

3. Background

- 3.1. The CRF is longer term funding provided by DWP aimed at tackling poverty with an emphasis on creating resilience. Unlike the HSF which provided short-term, reactive cost-of-living help, the CRF runs for three years (until March 2029) and focuses on immediate financial crisis support alongside building long-term financial resilience. The scheme replaces both HSF and Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs).
- 3.2. It is important to note that the funding profile is not linear and unspent funding from year one can be carried forward into subsequent years, helping to support the longer-term objective of improving household resilience and reducing repeat crisis demand.
- 3.3. The Crisis and Resilience Fund provides £25m of funding over three years. A breakdown of the allocation is set out below and as part of this funding, we are required to fund our DHP's, and this is capped.

Financial year	CRF allocation	Max spend on Housing Payments
2026/27	£8,307,194.63	£752,338
2027/28	£8,303,011.04	£752,338
2028/29	£8,346,900.38	£752,338
Total	£24,957,106.05	£2,257,014

Aim of the Funding

- 3.4.** The aim of the Crisis and Resilience Fund is to provide a longer-term local welfare support scheme over three years, from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2029. This gives the council greater stability than previous short-term funding arrangements and allows time to develop a more planned and preventative approach.
- 3.5.** As the national scheme details were confirmed late to local authorities, the first phase of delivery will focus on ensuring residents can access support quickly and safely, while the council continues to develop the most effective use of the fund.
- 3.6.** Over the three-year period, the council will use local evidence, demand data and partner feedback to consider how best to support households in crisis and help residents become more financially resilient.

Plan for the Fund

- 3.7.** As with the Household Support Fund the Council is required to have an application process to support providing immediate crisis support. That is open all the time unlike the previous scheme.
- 3.8.** We have learnt from the previous scheme have created a single, simplified online application which allows households to apply for the following in one application:
 - Crisis Payments
 - Housing Payments (previously DHPs)
 - Council Tax Discretionary Relief
- 3.9.** Through this route they will also be able to access Crisis payments between £100 and £250 with awards being delivered within 48 hours, from when the decision was made. This award will be delivered either by BACS or Post Office PayOut vouchers, redeemable for cash. Applications can also be made by friends and family as well as front-line staff and agencies such as Citizens Advice on their behalf.
- 3.10.** It is anticipated that £2.65m will be allocated to support crisis payments for the above.
- 3.11.** However, due to the limitations on the discretionary housing payments the Housing team have allocated £950k to support Council tenants with rent arrears. This will be integrated with the application route above in the next few months.
- 3.12.** This move to one application is part of continued to develop a sophisticated referral hub for all households seeking to access support or to ensure it is tailored support based on individual circumstances and reduces the number of applications and referrals. This will enable us to support households with:
 - Maximising benefit entitlement
 - Be provided with budget management advice
 - Have referrals to suggested support agencies
 - Detailed demographic and where possible individual household data to inform further development of support offer

Non-Applications

- 3.13.** The remaining funding is based on building financial resilience for households for the longer term.
- 3.14.** The Social Welfare team have worked collaboratively with all departments across the Council to identify the best use of the funding in 2026/27 and how we ensure the three-year fund will have the most impact in the longer term.
- 3.15.** For 2026/27 it is proposed to use the fund as follows:
- Providing **Social Welfare Advice (£487k)** to enable a continuation of the work that Citizens Advice provides. Building on the service which they already provide, supporting around 5000 households with general advice in 2025/26.
 - **Housing-related Resilience & Community Coordination Projects (£2.1m)** these include 14 community-based projects to tackle the underlying causes of homelessness, such as the family's project through Help the Homeless. It will also support the formation of the Income Management Team's Tenancy Stability and Resilience Project, that will enable us to continue with the facilitation of affordable moves in the private sector for vulnerable households.
 - **Staffing & Administration (£400k) to enable us** to deliver the crisis application and support the delivery of the non-application funding.
- 3.16.** Just under £2m in the first year is currently unallocated, whilst we continue as an organisation to develop the use of this fund and look at new areas, improve the links with work done in areas such as Public Health and Adults Social Care with projects such as Leading Better Lives. All projects will be objectively evaluated with a focus on measurable outcomes, prevention, and resilience.

4. Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications

4.1. Financial implications

There are no direct financial implications beyond those detailed within the body of the report.

Signed: Stuart McAvoy - Head of Finance

Date: 14th May 2026

4.2. Legal Implications

The Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF) must be administered in accordance with the conditions attached to the grant funding provided by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), including any guidance issued in respect of eligibility, permitted expenditure and reporting requirements. Failure to comply with grant conditions may expose the Council to recovery of funding and/or audit challenge.

Decisions on individual awards under the scheme must be made in a manner that is lawful, rational and procedurally fair, having regard to public law principles. The Council must ensure that:

- * clear eligibility criteria and decision-making guidance are in place;
- * decisions are properly recorded; and
- * there is provision for review or challenge of decisions.

The integration of multiple discretionary schemes (including former Discretionary Housing Payments and Council Tax Discretionary Relief) within a single application process must ensure continued compliance with the specific statutory frameworks governing those schemes

Legal Services should be consulted on the development of detailed scheme criteria and governance arrangements to ensure ongoing compliance and to mitigate public law and audit risks.

Signed: City Barrister & Head of Standards

Date:18/05/2026

4.3. Equalities Implications

Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council has a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which requires it to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The report outlines Leicester City Council's new Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF), a £25m three-year government pot replacing the short-term Household Support Fund. The (CRF) is specifically designed to support residents facing significant financial hardship. Evidence suggests that financial vulnerability disproportionately affects individuals within specific protected characteristic groups, including disabled people, certain ethnic minority groups, and women (particularly single parents). An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out to ensure that equality considerations are embedded in the design and implementation of the fund. Applications can be made by frontline staff, agencies (e.g., Citizens Advice), friends, or family on behalf of households, ensuring accessibility for those without digital means.

Signed: Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh Ext 37 4148

Date: 14 May 2026

4.4. Climate Emergency Implications

There are no significant climate emergency implications associated with this report.

Signed: Phil Ball, Sustainability Officer, Ext 372246

Date: 15th May 2026

5. Other implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

5.1 None

6. Background information and other papers:

7. Summary of appendices:

8. Is this a private report (If so, please indicate the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)? No

9. Is this a “key decision”? No