

North Yorkshire Council
Executive
21 April 2026

Crisis & Resilience Fund (CRF) Proposed Approach, Housing Payments Policy
Approval and Transition Arrangements 2026/27

Report of the Corporate Director Resources.

<p>1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT</p> <p>1.1 To note the Crisis & Resilience Fund (CRF) allocation confirmed by Government for North Yorkshire Council for the 2026/27 financial year of £6,644,811.48, and the national transition from existing discretionary support arrangements to the new CRF framework.</p> <p>1.2 To note that, within the overall CRF allocation, Government funding is intended to support low-income households experiencing financial hardship and rising living costs, including those living in off-gas properties reliant on LPG, heating oil or other alternative fuels, and to approve the inclusion of targeted discretionary fuel-related support within the Council's CRF delivery arrangements. This includes additional one-off Government funding of £1,061,623 for 2026/27 to support low-income households reliant on heating oil, reflecting the disproportionate impact on rural, off-gas communities, and delivered through the CRF in line with national guidance.</p> <p>1.3 To seek approval for North Yorkshire Council's approach to implementing the CRF from 1 April 2026, including interim delivery arrangements to ensure continuity of crisis and housing support for residents, while a longer-term No Wrong Door / One Front Door operating model is finalised, in line with CRF guidance which anticipates a phased implementation approach and requires the Council's CRF Delivery Plan to be submitted to the Department for Work and Pensions by 1 July 2026.</p> <p>1.4 To seek approval of the Housing Payments (Crisis & Resilience Fund) Policy (Appendix A), which formally replaces the Council's Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) policy from 1 April 2026, consistent with national arrangements and CRF grant conditions.</p> <p>1.5 To confirm governance, delegations and monitoring arrangements within the approved policy framework to ensure the Council remains compliant with CRF grant conditions, while enabling timely, flexible and discretionary decision-making and maintaining uninterrupted support for residents during the national transition.</p>

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report sets out the Council's proposed approach to establishing a Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF), bringing together immediate crisis support with a stronger focus on preventing

repeat hardship and supporting longer-term financial resilience. The CRF is designed to support low-income households experiencing financial shocks, while also investing in early help, income maximisation, debt advice and wider resilience activity in partnership with voluntary, community, organisations.

- 2.2 The report outlines how existing funding streams, including Housing Payments (previously Discretionary Housing Payments), will be incorporated into the CRF through a phased transition approach. This ensures continuity of support for residents while enabling the Council to test, learn and refine delivery arrangements over time. Arrangements for 2026/27 form the primary focus of this report.
- 2.3 [CRF government guidance](#) requires local authorities to deliver crisis, housing and resilience support through a “no wrong door” approach, ensuring residents are supported to access the right help through warm referrals, regardless of their initial point of contact with the Council or its partners. This requirement directly aligns with North Yorkshire Council’s Council Plan commitment to providing accessible, joined-up and preventative services, and with the Council’s Customer Experience Strategy, which sets out a One Front Door approach to customer access. The One Front Door model provides a single, consistent route into services, reduces fragmentation, and ensures residents experience a seamless, person-centred journey across council and partner support.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The CRF is a new national funding programme introduced by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and will operate in England from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2029. It replaces both the discretionary elements of the Household Support Fund (HSF) and Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP), bringing these funding streams together into a single, multi-year framework to provide greater certainty and stability for local authorities.
- 3.2 The CRF marks a deliberate shift in national policy away from short-term, emergency-only support towards a more preventative and resilience-focused approach. While the CRF continues to support households experiencing immediate financial crisis, it also invests in services that help residents stabilise their circumstances, reduce repeat crisis and build longer-term financial resilience. These include income maximisation, debt advice, financial capability support and stronger coordination of local support systems, particularly with voluntary, community and VCSE partners.
- 3.3 Under DWP guidance, the CRF is structured around four core strands:
- **Crisis Payments** – cash-first support for households facing an immediate financial shock
 - **Housing Payments** – support towards housing costs, replacing Discretionary Housing Payments
 - **Resilience Services** – preventative and early-help services that improve financial stability
 - **Community Coordination** – strengthening local referral pathways and join-up between services

3.4 DHPs will be incorporated into the CRF as Housing Payments from April 2026. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has confirmed that for Year 1 (2026/27) and Year 2 (2027/28), Housing Payment allocations will broadly reflect each authority's 2025/26 DHP allocation, providing continuity of support and financial stability during the transition period. For North Yorkshire Council, this equates to a Housing Payments allocation of £854,306 in each of 2026/27 and 2027/28. In Year 3 (2028/29), Housing Payment allocations have been updated using the latest national administrative data on housing cost shortfalls, benefit cap impacts and the removal of the spare room subsidy; North Yorkshire Council's Housing Payments allocation for 2028/29 is £544,565.

3.5 The overall CRF is ring-fenced, but individual strands within the Fund are not formally ring-fenced, giving councils flexibility to respond to local need while maintaining compliance with national expectations. However, in Year 1 (the FYE March 2027) and Year 2 (the FYE March 2028), the guidance provides that authorities are expected to maintain existing levels of spending on Housing Payments, using the FYE March 2026 allocations for DHPs as a guide.

3.6 North Yorkshire Council: CRF Allocations, provisional CRF allocations were published alongside the Local Government Finance Settlement in December 2025, with final figures confirmed in February 2026. These allocations cover the three-year period from 2026/27 to 2028/29 and provide North Yorkshire Council with a stable funding envelope to design and implement a longer-term approach to crisis and resilience support. North Yorkshire's allocation reflects.

- Population data
- Levels of deprivation using the 2025 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)
- Additional national weighting recognising the cost and complexity of delivering support in more rural areas

North Yorkshire Council's core CRF allocation (three-year settlement) is:

- 2026/27: £6,644,811.48
- 2027/28: £6,641,672.82
- 2028/29: £6,328,214.54

3.7 As part of the 2026/27 Local Government Finance Settlement, the Government announced on 16 March 2026 an additional top-up to the CRF to support low-income households reliant on heating oil, recognising the disproportionate impact on rural, off-gas communities. North Yorkshire Council has been allocated £1,061,623 for 2026/27 only. This funding is additional to and separate from the Council's core three-year CRF allocation and will not roll forward into future years.

3.8 Arrangements for 2026/27 are the primary focus for implementation, while indicative allocations for 2027/28 and 2028/29 provide an early planning assumption for future years.

Longer-term agreements or contracts will need to be considered where services span multiple years, and a phased “test and learn” approach is recommended to ensure delivery models remain effective, affordable and responsive to need.

- 3.9 Local authorities are required to deliver the CRF in line with national principles, including accessibility, dignity, cash-first support and equality considerations. These principles are embedded as core design requirements within North Yorkshire Council’s proposed CRF approach, while retaining flexibility to develop local delivery models that reflect community needs and will be set out in detail through the Council’s CRF Delivery Plan and implementation arrangements.

4.0 CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

- 4.1 The proposed CRF delivery model is closely aligned with the North Yorkshire Council Plan. It supports residents facing cost-of-living pressures, strengthens community and voluntary sector partnerships, promotes early intervention and prevention, and enables a more coordinated and financially sustainable approach to supporting vulnerable households.

- 4.2 The CRF also provide a significant opportunity to align delivery with the Council’s wider customer transformation programme and integration into our new Customer Platform system (Netcall). Over time, this will further strengthen the Council’s ability to deliver a consistent One Front Door experience, improve triage and warm referral between services, and enhance insight and performance management, while ensuring that interim arrangements remain fully operational and compliant from April 2026.

5.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 In developing the proposed approach, the following alternative options were considered:
- Delay implementation until the full CRF model is approved. This option was rejected as the CRF replaces both the Household Support Fund and DHP from 1 April 2026. Delaying implementation would risk disruption to crisis and housing support, causing hardship for residents and exposing the Council to financial and reputational risk.
 - Preferred option: The recommended approach is to approve a time-limited interim delivery model, ensuring continuity of support from April 2026 while enabling the proper design of a fully integrated No Wrong Door / One Front Door CRF model to return to Executive in July 2026.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The CRF is a ring-fenced, multi-year grant that can be delivered within existing allocations, with no additional call on the Council’s base budget. The phased transition from existing funding streams provides financial stability, supports preventative investment and enables longer-term planning while maintaining strong financial governance.

7.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The CRF is provided to the Council as a Section 31 grant and must be administered in accordance with the national guidance and grant determination issued by the DWP. The Council has discretion over local delivery arrangements within this framework, provided schemes are operated lawfully, transparently and consistently, with clear eligibility criteria and decision-making processes.
- 7.2 The Council must have due regard to its Public Sector Equality Duty, ensure compliance with data protection and information governance requirements, follow appropriate procurement and contracting rules where services are delivered through external partners, and ensure that any grant payments to voluntary sector and community organisations to assist in its distribution to individuals in need comply with Subsidy rules.

8.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The proposed CRF will support residents who are more likely to experience financial hardship, including those with protected characteristics. A needs-based and accessible delivery approach will help reduce barriers to access and ensure compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty. An initial Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and will be kept under review (See Appendix B).

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The CRF has limited direct climate impacts. However, by supporting residents to meet essential costs such as heating and housing, and by investing in early intervention and resilience, the Fund may contribute indirectly to reducing crisis-driven behaviours that can have adverse environmental effects. Delivery will be aligned with the Council's broader climate ambitions where practicable, including promoting efficient processes and minimising avoidable administrative activity. An initial Climate Change Impact Assessment has been undertaken and will be kept under review (See Appendix C).

10.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 The proposed interim delivery option provides a time-limited approach (up to six months) to delivering the CRF from April 2026, while the Council completes the design and approval of the permanent CRF operating model in line with national guidance.
- 10.2 The interim option is required because the CRF is fundamentally different from the previous Household Support Fund (HSF). While HSF focused primarily on short-term emergency support, the CRF brings together crisis payments, housing support and resilience services within a single, joined-up framework, with a stronger emphasis on preventing repeat crisis and building longer-term financial resilience.

This change requires a new service design, focused on a joined-up customer journey rather than separate schemes. The interim option ensures that:

- residents continue to receive timely crisis and housing support from 1 April, with no break in provision.
- the Council remains fully compliant with CRF guidance from day one; and
- sufficient time is available to design and embed a genuine No Wrong Door approach, aligned to the Council's One Front Door customer model. This approach is transitional and does not pre-determine the final CRF design over the three years.

10.3 What "No Wrong Door" means CRF guidance requires local authorities to operate a No Wrong Door approach, meaning residents should be able to seek help through any route and be supported to the right help without being passed between services or asked to repeat their story. In the future for North Yorkshire, this means:

- Residents can access support through multiple routes
 - telephone referrals, web forms or partner referrals
 - the first point of contact takes responsibility for triage and warm referral
 - crisis payments, housing support and resilience services are joined up behind the scenes.
 - The Council's One Front Door approach is how this national requirement is delivered locally.

10.4 What Will Be Delivered During the Interim Period

- During the interim period, the Council will deliver the following elements using existing services, partners and arrangements:
- **Crisis Payments and Immediate Support**
Emergency support for essential living costs, including food, energy and basic household needs, using a cash-first approach where appropriate.
- **Energy and Fuel Support**
Specialist energy and fuel crisis support delivered through existing partners, including targeted support for households using oil or solid fuel.
- **Housing-Related Support**
Continuity of housing-related financial support through existing arrangements as a bridge to CRF Housing Payments, ensuring payments due in early April can be made without disruption.
- **Support for Complex Needs**
Application-based crisis support for residents with complex circumstances, including access to essential household items or in-kind support where appropriate.

10.5 Access Routes

Multiple access routes will remain available during the interim period, including telephone, and partner referral, in line with CRF guidance. Customer Services will provide **initial triage**

only, routing residents to the most appropriate specialist service without duplicating assessments.

10.6 Justification for the Interim Option

Why an Interim Period Is Expected

CRF guidance explicitly recognises that local authorities require an initial period to design and embed local schemes, with a Delivery Plan required by 1 July 2026. This timescale reflects the scale and complexity of CRF, and the need to properly design:

- joined-up customer journeys,
- referral pathways across services and partners,
- resilience services alongside crisis support.
- The interim approach therefore reflects the national CRF timetable, not a lack of readiness. Alignment with the July Delivery Plan

10.7 The Interim Option

Ensures CRF compliance from day one; provides a controlled transition period to scope and design resilience services (such as debt advice, income maximisation and financial capability); enables learning from live delivery to inform the permanent model; and supports the development of a full CRF Delivery Plan, to return to Executive in June/July 2026.

10.8 Why This Option Is Preferred

The interim delivery option is recommended because it: prevents disruption to residents at the point previous schemes end; avoids rushed or fragmented solutions; makes best use of established and trusted delivery partners; and provides a lawful, proportionate and defensible bridge between legacy arrangements and the permanent CRF model.

11.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- i. That Executive notes the Crisis & Resilience Fund (CRF) allocation confirmed by Government for North Yorkshire Council for the 2026/27 financial year of £6,644,811.48, and the national transition from existing discretionary support arrangements to the new CRF framework.
- ii. That Executive notes and approves the inclusion, within the overall CRF allocation, of targeted discretionary fuel-related support to assist low-income households experiencing financial hardship and rising living costs, including those living in off-gas properties reliant on LPG, heating oil or other alternative fuels. This includes

additional one-off Government funding of £1,061,623 for 2026/27, to be delivered through the Crisis & Resilience Fund in line with national guidance.

- iii. That Executive approves North Yorkshire Council's approach to implementing the Crisis & Resilience Fund (CRF) from 1 April 2026, including the use of interim delivery arrangements to ensure continuity of crisis and housing support for residents while a longer-term No Wrong Door / One Front Door operating model is finalised, in line with CRF guidance which anticipates a phased implementation approach and requires the Council's CRF Delivery Plan to be submitted to the Department for Work and Pensions by 1 July 2026.
- iv. That Executive approves the Housing Payments (Crisis & Resilience Fund) Policy (Appendix A), which formally replaces the Council's Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) policy with effect from 1 April 2026, consistent with national arrangements and CRF grant conditions.
- v. That Executive approves and delegates authority to the Corporate Director – Resources (Section 151 Officer), in consultation with the relevant Executive Member, to operate and apply the approved CRF framework and Housing Payments Policy, including:
 - a) administering individual CRF awards (including Housing Payments and fuel-related support);
 - b) managing and monitoring expenditure across CRF strands to ensure compliance with grant conditions and value for money; and
 - c) making minor operational amendments required during the interim period, reporting back to Members as appropriate.

APPENDICES:

Appendix A – North Yorkshire Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF) - Housing Payments Policy 2026-27

Appendix B – Equality Impact Assessment Form

Appendix C – Climate Change Impact Assessment Form

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8 April 2026

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Presenter of Report – Margaret Wallace, Assistant Director, Customer, Revenue & Benefits

Note: Members are invited to contact the author in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries or questions.