

	Cabinet 9 March 2026
	Report from the Corporate Director for Residents and Housing Services
	Lead Member - Cabinet Member for Customer Experience, Resident Support and Culture (Councillor Promise Knight)
Crisis and Resilience Fund	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Key
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
List of Appendices:	One Appendix 1: Draft Crisis and Resilience Fund guidance
Background Papers:	None
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1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 Cabinet is asked to note the Government’s announcement of the Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF), which will replace the Household Support Fund (HSF) and Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) with effect from 1 April 2026.
- 1.2 Cabinet’s approval is asked to consider and approve the proposed approach for the allocation and distribution of the CRF.
- 1.3 On 11 June 2025, the Government announced that the Household Support Fund and Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) would be replaced by the Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF) with effect from 1 April 2026.

- 1.4 The CRF provides councils with a three-year funding settlement, aimed at strengthening local authorities' ability to respond to financial hardship while building longer-term resilience within communities. Statutory guidance for the CRF was published on 21 January 2026, setting out the objectives, eligible expenditure, and delivery expectations for local authorities.
- 1.5 This paper sets out the Council's proposed approach to the use of the Crisis and Resilience Fund, focusing on the provision of crisis support and the strengthening of resilience within local communities.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

That Cabinet

- 2.1 Note it is confirmed that Brent Council will receive a grant of £7.8 million from the Crisis and Resilience Fund (also referred to as CRF or the Fund). This funding is strictly ring-fenced and can only be used for the purposes set out within the fund to support households and communities experiencing financial hardship.
- 2.2 To approve the proposed approach for allocating and distributing the CRF as set out in paragraphs 7.0 – 7.24 of the report.
- 2.3 To note the proposed approach whereby the Corporate Director for Residents & Housing Services in consultation with the Lead Member for Customer Experience, Resident Support and Culture will establish such detailed criteria as may be necessary to enable appropriate allocation of funding in accordance with Recommendation 2.2 above and thereafter amend the eligibility criteria during the life time of this scheme if necessary for the reasons detailed in the report.

3.0 Background and Detail

Cabinet Member Foreword

- 3.1 As a council, we remain committed to supporting residents through both immediate pressures and the longer-term challenges that too many households continue to face. The introduction of the Crisis and Resilience Fund represents a significant and welcome shift towards a more preventative model of support. It enables us not only to respond quickly when residents are in crisis, but also to build stronger foundations that help prevent hardship from happening in the first place. By focusing on early intervention, income maximisation and neighbourhood-based support, we can ensure that help reaches people when they need it most, while strengthening resilience across our communities
- 3.2 This report sets out how we will use the Fund to deliver practical, targeted assistance supporting families with the essentials, preventing homelessness, enhancing access to advice, and working closely with our voluntary and community partners. It also outlines how we will invest in the systems, skills and local partnerships needed to create a more coherent, preventative offer for the

future. Our aim is clear: to provide timely support, reduce inequalities, and help residents feel more secure and better able to thrive.

- 3.3 The DWP advised that the new Crisis and Resilience Fund will be supported by £1 billion per year over the multi-year period (from April 2026 to March 2029). Of that total, £842 million a year has been allocated specifically to local authorities in England.
- 3.4 The CRF aims to provide an effective safety net for low-income households experiencing financial shock and hardship while simultaneously investing in longer-term financial resilience at individual and community level.
- 3.5 The Fund is designed to go beyond short-term crisis intervention by placing a strong emphasis on building financial resilience and reducing future reliance on emergency support. The DWP has been clear that prevention must be at the forefront of the Fund. In line with this direction the CRF prioritises preventative and early-intervention approaches that address the underlying drivers of financial hardship, such as low income, debt, insecure housing, and barriers to employment.

4.0 Alignment with Brent's Prevention Delivery Model

- 4.1 The Fund represents a welcome shift in national policy towards strengthening resilience alongside crisis response, enabling councils to invest in preventative, early-intervention approaches that reduce future demand for emergency support. This approach is strongly aligned with Brent's existing delivery model, building on the established work of the Council's community hubs, community wellbeing service, and the Council's commitment to accessible neighbourhood support.
- 4.2 The Crisis and Resilience Fund provides an opportunity to consolidate and further develop this neighbourhood support approach, strengthening local partnerships, supporting residents to manage financial shocks, and embedding resilience within communities, while continuing to ensure timely support is available for households facing immediate hardship.

5.0 Funding Allocation

- 5.1 Brent's CRF allocation is £7,793,104.94 per annum (2026/27 and 2027/28), reducing to £7,580,924.97 in Year 3 (2028/29).
- 5.2 This compares favourably to funds received in 2025/26, when Brent received £4.9m through the Household Support Fund and £1,620,155 for DHP (a total of just over £6.5m). The Council is forecasting full expenditure of the DHP and HSF allocation by 31 March 2026; this is anticipated to support approximately 21,795 households in crisis.
- 5.3 The housing support allocation of the CRF is confirmed at £1,620,155 and is included within the total £7,793,104.94 allocation for Year 1 (2026/27). This total includes £180,160.97 for housing administration costs. The same allocations

apply in Year 2 (2027/28). In Year 3 (2028/29), the housing support allocation within the CRF reduces to £1,588,136, with no separate housing administration budget allocated.

6.0 Delivery Principles and Flexibilities

- 6.1 For Year 3, DWP guidance allows authorities to adjust the Housing Payment allocation of £1,588,136 by up to +/-20% compared to the indicative amount to respond to local housing needs. This flexibility applies only in Year 3 and does not represent an annual adjustment; authorities retain discretion to allocate funds across other CRF components Crisis Payments, Resilience Services, and Community Coordination based on local priorities, with the DWP encouraging a stronger emphasis on preventative support to reduce reliance on crisis intervention.
- 6.2 Local Authorities have flexibility to identify households in need, using the data and information available to them. Our approach is guided by a clear, documented policy outlining eligibility criteria and how households can access support. Authorities can also use the DWP's Searchlight portal and relevant Universal Credit data to inform decision-making. This approach is already embedded in the Council Household Support Fund arrangements, where we used the same data-led framework and partnership working to ensure timely support for vulnerable households.
- 6.3 Authorities are also encouraged to work with partners, including voluntary and community organisations, to ensure the needs of vulnerable households are fully addressed. This approach is already embedded in the Council Household Support Fund arrangements, where a clear framework and partnership working are in place to support residents in need.
- 6.4 The Crisis and Resilience Fund must be spent or committed by 31 March 2029 which is within the defined fund period. The DWP guidance confirms that support can be delivered through a range of mechanisms, including cash-first payments (such as bank transfers and cash-out vouchers), vouchers and in-kind provision of goods, and can be made directly to individuals or, where appropriate, to third parties. Irrespective of the method chosen, authorities are expected to adopt a cash-first, needs-based approach and evaluate and mitigate associated risks, including the risk of fraud and misuse, through proportionate controls. Again, this approach is already embedded in the Council Household Support Fund approach.
- 6.5 The Fund is designed to provide timely, flexible support to households experiencing financial hardship. This includes assistance with basic living costs such as food, utilities, and essential household items; housing-related support, including rent shortfalls, arrears, or Discretionary Housing Payment support; and immediate needs through cash-first payments, vouchers, or direct provision of goods and services.
- 6.6 The Fund also prioritises targeted assistance for vulnerable groups, including households with children, disabled residents, or those at risk of homelessness,

and supports preventative interventions aimed at reducing the likelihood of repeated crises and building longer-term household resilience.

- 6.7 The DWP guidance does not prescribe specific percentages for how the Crisis and Resilience Fund should be allocated across the four components. Authorities retain discretion to distribute funding between Crisis Payments, Housing Payments, Resilience Services and Community Coordination, with only an expectation to maintain historic Housing Payment levels in Years 1 and 2 and to devote a significant but locally defined proportion of funding to building financial resilience. However, the DWP has been clear that the overarching purpose of the Fund is to prevent households from falling into crisis in the first place. Prevention and early intervention are therefore central to the Fund's intent, and allocations should reflect this priority.
- 6.8 The CRF guidance clearly states the Fund is classified as Local Welfare Provision (LWP) and may be used to enhance existing Local Welfare Assistance (LWA) schemes. In Brent, the LWA is delivered through the Council's Resident Support Fund which continue to play a vital role as established discretionary mechanisms for providing crisis support. However, the CRF is not intended to replace existing LWA schemes, but to complement and strengthen them.
- 6.9 Authorities should consider household circumstances when making decisions on CRF support. Households may be receiving other forms of assistance, and this should be taken into account to avoid duplication where possible. However, families receiving other support are not automatically excluded from receiving assistance through the CRF.
- 6.10 The CRF allows local authorities to provide crisis support regardless of immigration status where support is delivered under statutory duties, including safeguarding children, meeting adult care needs or protecting public health. In these circumstances, Crisis Payments may be lawfully made to people with No Recourse to Public Funds using alternative legal powers, while remaining aligned with the Fund's cash-first, needs-based and person-centred principles.
- 6.11 For context, in 2025/26 the Council received funding under the Household Support Fund (HSF). During that year, the total funding of approximately £4.9 million was allocated across a range of initiatives to support residents facing financial hardship, including crisis support, food provision, debt and immigration advice, employment and skills support, and community wellbeing services.

7.0 Proposed Use of the Fund

- 7.1 The proposed approach for the CRF will focus on the four key strands outlined in the guidance: crisis support, housing-related support, resilience, and prevention. Crisis support will provide timely assistance to households experiencing urgent financial or social needs, helping to prevent situations from escalating into full crisis. Housing-related support will target early intervention for residents at risk of homelessness, including assistance with rent arrears, deposits, and other housing-related costs, alongside tenancy sustainment

advice and advocacy. Resilience initiatives will strengthen households and communities to reduce future demand on statutory services through partnership working with voluntary and community sector organisations, while prevention will embed early, preventative approaches to ensure residents receive support at the earliest opportunity and reduce the likelihood of issues escalating.

7.2 This will be delivered through the following phases of activity:

7.2.1 **Phase 1 (from 1 April 2026)** will ensure all existing schemes are brought under the CRF, aligned with the new guidance, and allocations agreed as set out in this paper.

7.2.2 **Phase 2 (April-October 2026)** will strengthen delivery models through targeted investment in IT and scaling early intervention activity using a 'test and learn' approach, building on work such as neighbourhood initiatives and household income maximisation.

7.2.3 **Phase 3 (October 2026-March 2027)** will develop more detailed proposals for Years 2 and 3, focusing on targeting funding towards interventions that build longer-term resilience and reduce future demand for crisis support, ensuring continuity of support while new approaches are progressed

7.3 More detail about Fund allocations across each of the key strands (crisis, housing and resilience are set out below).

Crisis

Resident Support Fund proposal for 26/27

7.4 It is proposed that at least £1,564,098.99 of the Crisis & Resilience Fund is allocated to the Council's Resident Support Fund equivalent to 2025/2026 allocation, to provide timely support to residents experiencing financial hardship. This will include assistance with food, energy, water, housing-related costs, and other essential household needs. Support will be delivered in line with CRF guidance, using existing mechanisms, eligibility criteria, and local discretion to ensure households in genuine need are prioritised. Over time, the Council will seek to reduce reliance on reactive crisis support by strengthening preventative and resilience-building interventions, with the aim of reducing future demand for emergency assistance while continuing to protect the most vulnerable households.

7.5 In addition, £200,000 funding will be used to make targeted improvements to existing processes and systems to strengthen case management and management information reporting, enabling a more efficient process of providing accurate CRF returns to the DWP. This will enable better identification and tracking of household interactions, support a more joined-up and preventative approach, and improve the speed and quality of CRF reporting to the DWP. This investment is solely to meet the specific monitoring and reporting

requirements of the CRF, including enhanced Management Information returns to the DWP, and does not form part of the Council's wider digital strategy.

Free School Meals Holiday Vouchers

- 7.6 It is proposed that the CRF be used to continue providing free school meal (FSM) vouchers to eligible children during school holidays. Support will be offered over 13 weeks across the year covering Easter, Summer, October half-term, Christmas, and February half-term holidays. This initiative ensures that children from low-income households continue to receive nutritious meals when schools are closed, helping to alleviate food insecurity and reduce household financial pressures. The scheme builds on the Council's experience with the Household Support Fund, using existing eligibility criteria and delivery mechanisms to ensure that support reaches those most in need in a timely and efficient manner. An allocation of £ 2,180,490 will be provided to deliver this initiative and will be reviewed annually.

Immigration Support Services

- 7.7 Funding to continue to be used to provide targeted support for residents with immigration-related needs, including those with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) where there is a genuine care need. This support will ensure that vulnerable individuals and families, including those with serious health conditions or children at risk, can access essential household support, advice, and guidance, in line with CRF principles. By offering tailored assistance, the Council can help mitigate financial hardship, prevent escalation into crisis, and ensure that support is provided equitably and in accordance with eligibility criteria, while working closely with partner organisations to reach those most in need. An allocation of £53,200 will be provided to deliver this initiative from 1 April 2026 – 31 March 2027.

Housing-Related Payments

- 7.8 For Year 1 (2026/27) of the CRF, the Housing Payment allocation has been fully determined in line with DWP guidance, with no discretionary options for adjustment. The Council allocation of £1,620,155, together with the associated Housing administration budget of £180,160.97, will provide direct support to residents experiencing housing-related financial hardship, including rent shortfalls, arrears, and other costs that could place households at risk of crisis or homelessness.
- 7.9 In Year 2 (2027/28), the allocation for Housing Payments continues to be maintained at equivalent levels to 2025/26 Discretionary Housing Payments, as stated by the guidance, ensuring continuity of support.
- 7.10 From Year 3 (2028/29), Housing Payment funding will be provided through the CRF as part of a phased transition, with councils expected to spend broadly in line with their allocation, while retaining some flexibility to reflect local needs. The CRF is a ring-fenced multi-year grant that must be spent within the funding period; there is no provision for automatic carry-forward of unspent allocations

beyond the financial year, and any underspend at the end of Year 3 may be subject to recovery.

- 7.11 A new Housing Payment Policy, developed in partnership with Housing Services, will be introduced from 1 April 2026. The new policy will seek to further strengthen the Council's approach to homelessness prevention and tenancy sustainment. This presents a clear opportunity to enhance early-intervention support, targeting assistance more effectively to reduce the risk of households entering or remaining in temporary accommodation. The new policy will replace the previous DHP policy and align housing-related financial support with the Council's wider homelessness prevention objectives.
- 7.12 In addition, we are proposing to use £100,000 from the CRF to address gaps in homelessness prevention and early intervention. This aligns with the Council's Preventing Homelessness Programme, recognising that timely support can prevent households from entering crisis and reduce longer-term demand on statutory homelessness services. Funding will support partnership working with voluntary and community sector organisations that specialise in housing advice, tenancy sustainment, mediation, and support for residents at risk of homelessness. This includes early help with housing-related costs, advocacy, and practical support to resolve issues before they escalate. By strengthening collaboration with specialist partners and embedding preventative approaches within neighbourhood and Hub-based services, the Council aims to reduce homelessness risk, support tenancy stability, and improve long-term resilience for vulnerable households, in line with CRF guidance.

Resilience

- 7.13 In addition to effective crisis responses, the new guidance requires a significant focus on building resilience in local communities and households. This includes greater emphasis on accessible preventative support, early intervention across the multiple factors that typically interact with income insecurity and debt, and reducing repeated reliance on crisis assistance. This aligns with Brent's approach to date and investments are proposed across several key initiatives that are established and / or underway.

Well & Warm

- 7.14 It is proposed that funding from CRF be allocated to continue and evolve the Well and Warm Scheme, which supports older and vulnerable residents adversely affected by ongoing high utility costs. Delivery will continue through community hubs, wellbeing community hubs, and other trusted partners across the borough. The scheme helps residents keep their homes warm, particularly during the winter months, reducing the risk of fuel poverty and associated health impacts. Delivery will continue in partnership with Green Doctors, who provide residents with a free consultation and expert advice on energy efficiency and household energy management. The proposed allocation of £40,000 will ensure continuity of provision and alignment with the CRF's objective to provide timely, flexible support that addresses both immediate household needs and longer-term resilience.

New Horizon / Community Wellbeing Service

- 7.15 The Crisis and Resilience Fund will continue to support Sufra by sustaining the assistance previously provided through the Household Support Fund. This includes £400,000 in funding for Sufra's work at the New Horizon Centre, where a community shop operating on a membership model is delivered alongside free meals and a wraparound offer. The service provides weekly food support, advice and guidance, and practical assistance to help residents access welfare, housing, and employment services. Maintaining and strengthening this partnership will ensure continuity of provision, enable targeted support for vulnerable households, and leverage Sufra's local expertise and integrated service delivery to provide timely and effective crisis support in line with CRF guidance.

Debt Advice Support

- 7.16 It is proposed that funding from the CRF be allocated to continue and expand debt advice support for Brent residents. £100,000 is proposed for Citizens Advice and £40,000 for the Sheriff Centre, enabling both organisations to provide timely guidance on debt management, budgeting, and financial resilience. This support will help residents navigate financial difficulties, access entitlements, and reduce the risk of crisis escalation, in line with the CRF's Resilience Services strand, which prioritises interventions that strengthen household financial stability and prevent repeated hardship.
- 7.17 An additional allocation of £65,000 is proposed to further strengthen these services, enabling more residents to access debt advice and support, build long-term financial resilience, and reduce reliance on the Resident Support Fund. Residents receiving crisis support will be encouraged to engage with accredited debt advice and money management services and will be required to provide evidence of this engagement before being eligible to apply again to the Resident Support Fund, helping households move towards greater financial stability.
- 7.18 An allocation of £100,000 is proposed to continue support for the Credit Union in providing affordable financial services to residents. This includes access to low-cost loans, savings schemes, and financial advice, helping households to avoid high-interest debt and reduce reliance on high-cost credit providers. By supporting the Credit Union, the Council can promote financial inclusion, improve household budgeting, and enhance longer-term financial resilience, in line with the CRF's objective to provide both immediate support and preventative interventions that reduce repeated financial crises.

Employment

- 7.19 It is proposed that £100,000 from the CRF will be used to support employment and work-readiness interventions for residents experiencing financial hardship, recognising that sustainable employment is a key factor in building long-term resilience and reducing reliance on crisis support. Funding will enable targeted

assistance such as employability coaching, skills development, CV and interview support, digital inclusion, and guidance on in-work benefits to ensure residents are better able to access and sustain employment. This preventative approach complements other CRF interventions, including income maximisation and debt advice, and supports residents to move towards financial independence, improved household stability, and reduced risk of repeated crisis.

Household Income Maximisation

- 7.20 It is proposed that £350,000 from the Crisis and Resilience Fund is allocated to support the delivery of a data-led household income maximisation approach. This proposal aligns with the DWP Crisis and Resilience Fund guidance, which places a clear emphasis on prevention, early intervention and reducing repeat demand on crisis support. The Council is already procuring the LIFT tool, which brings together multiple datasets to identify households that may be missing out on financial entitlements. In line with CRF guidance on early intervention and prevention, investing in proactive engagement with financially vulnerable residents to support them to claim unclaimed benefits and access wider support. The model will combine wider campaigns to raise awareness of support available with case managed proactive engagement with individual households that are identified as being financially vulnerable. The aim of this approach will be to increase household income, reducing financial pressures, and preventing future crises, while complementing the wider work of the Hub team.

Building Neighbourhood Community Resilience

- 7.21 One of the key CRF outcomes is strengthening neighbourhood level support networks. As stated in the guidance “this includes strengthening resilience networks within local communities, that in turn boost the financial resilience of individuals within these communities”. Therefore, in addition to the specific initiatives already set out, it is proposed that £150k is allocated to enable locally rooted VCSE organisations to play an enhanced role in building community capacity and resilience. This investment will support VCSE partners to coordinate across different community groups, strengthening referral pathways, and delivering more preventative support that reduces escalation into crisis.
- 7.22 This funding will prioritise organisations with strong neighbourhood presence and trusted relationships, recognising that these partners are often best placed to identify emerging need early, engage residents who may not approach statutory services, and provide culturally competent, community-led support. By investing in local infrastructure and coordination, the Council will strengthen collective capacity rather than create parallel services.
- 7.23 This proposal directly supports the wider neighbourhood model by Brent Health and Wellbeing Board in January 2026, which sets out an ambition to strengthen how all organisations and teams work together in neighbourhoods alongside communities. There are significant benefits in local VCSE organisations participating in integrated neighbourhood teams alongside the Council, NHS

and other agencies. As ever-present anchors within neighbourhoods, they can bridge gaps between communities and formal services, improve trust and accessibility and enable residents and communities to build their own capacity and resilience. This investment approach strengthens collaborative working with communities and embeds co-production at a local level. By Year 2 of the CRF programme, this will support the development of a more mature and integrated neighbourhood model, one that moves beyond transactional crisis response towards shared ownership of prevention, early intervention and long-term financial resilience.

Administration Costs

7.24 An administration budget of £730,161 is required to support the effective delivery of the Resident Support Fund and Housing Payments. Of this total, £180,160.97 relates specifically to Housing administration costs, which have been clearly stipulated by the DWP. The remaining balance supports the administration of the wider Resident Support Fund. This will fund a dedicated Team Leader and the management, supervision, and operational oversight of 11 staff responsible for processing applications, undertaking eligibility checks, and ensuring timely and accurate payments. The allocation will ensure appropriate capacity, consistency of decision-making, strong financial controls, and compliance with audit and reporting requirements, while supporting timely support to residents and mitigating the risk of error, delay, or fraud.

8.0 Financial Considerations

8.1 In 2026/27, the Household Support Fund has been merged with the Discretionary Housing Payments into the consolidated Crisis and Resilience Fund. Brent's allocation from the Crisis and Resilience Fund is £7.8m, an increase of £1.3m (19%) when compared to the 2025/26 allocation.

The table below outlines the confirmed allocation of the Household Support Fund (HSF) for 2025/26 alongside the proposed allocations for the Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF) for 2026/27.

Costs (26/27 expected)	HSF Costs 2025/2026	Expected Programme Costs (26/27 expected)
Housing Payment	Covered within DHP allocation	£1,620,155
Funding for CRF and RSF payments (All households – top up the Resident Support Fund and provide ongoing reactive crisis support through the online application process.	£1,565,482	£1,564,099
School Holiday Vouchers (13 weeks 11182)	2,077,140	£2,180,490
Sufra CWS contract	£400,00	£400,000

Grant for debt advice provision (CAB started December 2024, 3 years plus 1 plus 1) Additional £65,000	£100,000	165,000
Sheriff Centre debt advice	£40,000	£40,000
Grant for immigration advice provision	£53,200	£53,200
Grant for Additional food support initiatives Budget not utilised for 2025/2026	£10,000	
Well and Warm Budget not fully utilised for 2025/2026	£136,00	£40,000
Top up for Credit Union loan fund	£100,000	£100,000
Income Maximisation Project		£350,000
Employment	£20,000	£100,000
Preventing Homelessness (Resilience)		£100,000
Neighbourhood Community Resilience		£150,000
Administration costs Inclusive of £180,160.97 Housing Admin	£400,000	£730,161
IT Enhancement		£200,000
Total	£4,901,822	£7,793,105

8.2 If the authority fails to comply with any of the conditions set out in this guidance or the Grant Determination, or if any overpayment is made under this grant, or any amount is paid in error, or any unspent funding at the end of Year 3 is not returned, the Minister may reduce, suspend or withhold grant payments, or require the repayment of the whole or any part of the CRF grant monies paid. There is no match funding required for this grant.

8.3 Authorities must comply with DWP's reporting and MI requirements. This includes submitting an annual delivery plan and providing MI returns on a six-monthly basis signed by the s151 officer.

9.0 Legal Considerations

9.1 The funding for the Crisis and Resilience Fund ("CRF") is being provided by the Department of Work and Pension which is being distributed to Councils. The funding is to be distributed by March 2029 to support households and communities experiencing financial hardship, which include housing related payments, welfare payments and immediate assistance for financial and social needs.

9.2 Officers have proposed that the Corporate Director of Residents and Housing Services in conjunction with the Lead Member for Customer Experience, Resident Support and Culture establish such detailed criteria as may be necessary to enable appropriate allocation of the funding.

9.3 The new allocation of the CRF funding will run from the 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2029 and the funds must be spent or committed by the 31 March 2029. Given

the value of the CRF allocation to the Council of £7.8m over three years, decisions by the Corporate Director of Residents Service and Housing regarding the distribution of funds and the eligibility criteria for its distribution will be classed as a Key Decision.

- 9.4 Officers will need to have regard to Subsidy Control regime in relation to any arrangements entered into for the distribution of the CRF.
- 9.5 As the Council will be an accountable body in respect of the grant funding and in accordance with section 9 of the table at 9.5 of Part 3 of the Constitution and Financial Regulation 8.2 of Part 2 of the Constitution, the Corporate Director of Residents Service and Housing must ensure that the objectives of the grant are consistent with the Council's objectives and priorities in accordance with Financial Regulation 9.1.2. The distribution of the CRF must only be used to provide support to household as defined within the grant conditions as set out by the Department of Work and Pensions.

10.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

- 10.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty, as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have "due regard" to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who have a "protected characteristic" and those who do not share that protected characteristic. The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. The Council also internally recognises care experience and socio-economic status as protected characteristics.
- 10.2 The proposed funding allocations within the CRF are expected to have a positive impact on advancing EDI. The allocations specifically target groups who are disproportionately affected by financial hardship, including low-income households, residents with disabilities, families with children, residents with No Recourse to Public Funds, older people, and those at greater risk of homelessness. The programme is also aligned with the Council's voluntary adoption of the socioeconomic duty, supporting efforts to reduce inequalities linked to socioeconomic disadvantage. Overall, the funding supports both crisis intervention and longer-term resilience building, helping to reduce structural barriers to financial stability and improve equitable access to support across Brent's diverse communities. -income households, residents with disabilities, families with children, residents with No Recourse to Public Funds, older people, and those at greater risk of homelessness. The programme is also aligned with the Council's voluntary adoption of the socio-economic duty, supporting efforts to reduce inequalities linked to socioeconomic disadvantage. Overall, the funding supports both crisis intervention and -longer term resilience building, helping to reduce structural barriers to financial stability and improve equitable- access to support across Brent's diverse communities.

- 10.3 Equality impacts will continue to be monitored through implementation. Programme changes such as the proposed eligibility requirement for evidence of engagement with debt advice services before residents can re-apply to the Resident Support Fund (para 8.11) may require an Equality Impact Assessment. We will complete an EIA as necessary to ensure that any potential differential impacts on protected groups are clearly identified and appropriately addressed.
- 10.4 In addition, planned improvements to case management and data systems (para 8.2) will enhance the Council's ability to collect and analyse EDI data across CRF interventions. This increased level of insight will help to support more targeted and inclusive service design and improve monitoring of outcomes for protected and vulnerable groups.

11.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

- 11.1 None

12.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations

- 12.1 An administration budget of £730,161 is required to support the effective delivery of the Resident Support Fund and Housing Payments. This will fund a dedicated Team Leader and the management, supervision, and operational oversight of 11 staff responsible for processing applications, undertaking eligibility checks, and ensuring timely and accurate payments. The allocation will ensure appropriate capacity, consistency of decision-making, strong financial controls, and compliance with audit and reporting requirements, while supporting timely support to residents and mitigating the risk of error, delay, or fraud.

13.0 Communication Considerations

- 13.1 The statutory purpose and direction of the CRF will be made clear across all residents facing and stakeholder facing communications. It will be reiterated that the fund is deliberately structured to move beyond emergency payments, prioritising financial resilience, early intervention, income maximisation, and prevention.
- 13.2 This narrative will be consistent across all channels, so residents, partners, and staff understand that the CRF is not just emergency cash but a broader safety net plus prevention framework.

Clear guidance, simple scripts, low burden processes, and training for staff will be developed that can be delivered to staff.

Report sign off:

Thomas Cattermole

Corporate Director, Residents and Housing Services