

## **TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL**

### **REPORT AND DECISION NOTICE OF OFFICER KEY**

#### **DECISION TAKEN ON 31 MARCH 2026**

#### **PUBLISHED ON 1 APRIL 2026**

### **HOUSING PAYMENT POLICY AND CRISIS PAYMENT POLICY**

The **Key Decision** relates to the approval and implementation of two new statutory-linked policies required under the Government's Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF) commencing 1 April 2026:

- Housing Payment Policy (effective 1 April 2026)
- Crisis Payment Policy (effective 1 April 2026) Both policies accompany this Notice.

This **Key Decision** was taken by Katherine Kynaston, Director: Housing, Commercial and Customer Services being the appropriate Chief Officer exercising powers in compliance with the Council's Constitution.

The **Key Decision** is related to the following identified item contained within the Council's Notice of Key Decisions as published on 15 January 2026.

### **INFORMATION**

The UK Government is introducing the Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF) from 1 April 2026 as a new national programme designed to support households facing acute financial difficulty and housing-related vulnerability. The CRF brings together and replaces several previous local discretionary schemes, including the Emergency Welfare Assistance Programme and elements of Discretionary Housing Payments.

Local Authorities are required to operate CRF in accordance with national guidance, ensuring that support is provided in a consistent, transparent and auditable manner. The CRF is a ringfenced, multi-year grant (2026–2029) with defined outcome requirements relating to crisis prevention, financial stability and sustaining housing.

To meet these national requirements, each Local Authority must adopt two core policies:

#### **Housing Payment Policy – Background Summary**

The Housing Payment Policy sets out how the Council will provide targeted financial support to residents at risk of homelessness or struggling to sustain their current accommodation. This includes support with rent shortfalls, essential housing-related costs, and help to prevent crisis escalation where accommodation is at risk.

The policy ensures consistent eligibility criteria, a fair assessment process, and compliance with the CRF's requirement that Local Authorities prioritise interventions that maintain safe, secure and sustainable housing.

### **Crisis Payment Policy – Background Summary**

The Crisis Payment Policy defines the Council's approach to providing short-term financial assistance to households experiencing an immediate and severe financial crisis. This includes emergency provision for food, energy, essential household needs, and other urgent costs where residents have no other means of support.

The policy reflects the CRF requirement for clear decision-making frameworks, proportionate evidence thresholds, and robust audit arrangements to demonstrate lawful and equitable distribution of public funds.

### **Urgency of Decision**

The Council must have approved policies in place from 1 April 2026 to ensure lawful administration, audit compliance, and the ability to make payments from the national allocation.

Due to extremely compressed national timescales for the introduction of the CRF and the release of final guidance with short timescales until adoption, the Council has had insufficient time to follow the Cabinet process initially indicated in the Notice of Key Decisions published followed by the subsequent call-in period and must bring this decision forward under special urgency provisions.

Approval is therefore required by 31 March 2026 so that the schemes can go live from 1 April 2026 as required, ensuring continuity of support for residents and avoiding any gap following the end of legacy discretionary schemes on 31 March 2026.

### **Legal Implications**

The Director: Housing, Commercial and Customer Services has authority under the Council's Constitution to take this decision. All legal requirements, including notification to, and consent of, the Chair of Scrutiny Management Board to disapply call-in due to urgency, have been undertaken prior to the decision being taken. This decision is a case of special urgency. Given the date by which this key decision must be made, to comply with the statutory requirement to have the revised policies in force from 1 April 2026, compliance with Regulation 10 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 is impractical. The policies have been reviewed from a legal perspective.

### **Financial Implications**

Both policies are funded through the Crisis Resilience Fund (CRF), which is a consolidated revenue grant allocated as part of the Local Government Finance Settlement. The CRF is a new grant for 2026/27 and combines the previous Discretionary Housing Payments grant and Household Support Fund. Final annual grant allocations for 2026/27 through to 2028/29 were published by Government in February 2026.

All expenditure must comply with CRF guidance, grant conditions, audit requirements, and reporting obligations.

The CRF allocation is ring-fenced, and both schemes will be managed within the confirmed allocation.

### **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- Delay approval: Not viable, as the CRF requires schemes to be operational from 1 April 2026. Any delay would leave the Council without lawful mechanisms to provide essential crisis or housing support.
- Continue previous schemes (e.g., Emergency Welfare Assistance, Discretionary Housing Payments): Not legally permissible, as the previous schemes legally ends on 31 March 2026.

As the CRF replaces these schemes nationally, approving the two new policies is the only lawful and operationally viable option.

### **DECISION**

**To approve the Housing Payment Policy and Crisis Payment Policy, enabling both schemes to operate from 1 April 2026 in accordance with national Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF) requirements.**

These policies will allow the Council to provide timely, lawful, and accessible support to residents under the CRF framework.

#### **Further Information/Contact –**

This decision is a case of special urgency. Given the date by which this key decision must be made, compliance with Regulation 10 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 is impractical. Having obtained the agreement of Councillor Mark Boylan, the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, in accordance with Regulation 11, the decision will take effect on 1 April 2026. In light of the circumstances described above, the Chair also agreed to waive call-in in respect of this decision.

**Lee Higgins – Head of Customer Relationship and Welfare Services**  
**lee.higgins@telford.gov.uk**  
**01952 383835**

**Signed:**



**Anthea Lowe**

**Director: Policy & Governance**

**Dated: 31 March 2026**