

Appendix A

London Borough of Brent - Customer Services

Local Welfare Assistance Scheme - Consultation

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1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Council undertook a consultation on its proposals for a Local Welfare Assistance Scheme although there were no statutory obligations to do so.
- 1.2 The 5 week consultation period ran from 6th December 2012 until 11th January 2013 to permit sufficient time for responses to be evaluated and for the implications to be analysed and a scheme determined by the Executive prior to implementation.
- 1.3 The consultation was undertaken through the following means:
 - A consultation questionnaire was available on line,
 - A printed consultation questionnaire was available for Social Fund customers visiting Harlesden and Willesden Job Centre Plus offices,
 - Publication of information on the Council's website,
 - The issue of an email informing addressees of the consultation and how to access it to representatives of the Voluntary Sector Service User Consultative forum,
 - The issue of an email / letter to other local organisations and local MP's informing them of the consultation and how to access it,
 - Meetings with Job Centre Plus personnel attended by officers.
- 1.4 Data comprised within this report for the Borough as a whole has been compiled from 2011 census data where available. However, the low response rate to the consultation means that the degree to which this is representative of the population as a whole should be given caution when making comparisons. Also, a number of respondents did not answer all of the questions or may have given more than one response to some questions that may have the effect of distorting some of the results.
- 1.5 In view of the comments outlined in section 1.4 above, Members should be aware of these potential shortcomings as they consider the weight they give to the outcomes of the consultation alongside other drivers for change, including the equalities impact assessment.

2.0 Purpose and scope of the consultation

- 2.1 The purpose of the consultation was to engage with residents and organisations within Brent concerning the Council's proposals for its Local Welfare Assistance Scheme.
- 2.2 The consultation commenced on 6th December 2012 and the proposals were published on the Council website at that time and available for access online from public libraries and customer service local offices within the Borough from the same date.
- 2.3 The consultation informed residents and other stakeholders of the intended changes and the Council's proposals.
- 2.4 Respondents were asked the following questions:
 - To rank in order of importance their preferences for each of the proposed changes,

- To state whether they agreed or disagreed that each of the proposed changes was fair
- To add any additional comments to support responses given to the ranking of importance and fairness questions or alternative options that the Council should consider
- To comment on whether the proposed changes are likely to affect particular individuals or groups more than others and if so, how these may be addressed
- To provide any other additional comments concerning the proposals

3.0 **Current use of Social Fund Service**

3.1 The DWP has provided some data concerning the use of its existing Social Fund service. However, this is not complete and as the service proposed for Brent Council will differ from this, it is not possible to fully determine the effects of the proposals on residents at this stage. The data that has been provided for the existing DWP scheme in Brent is shown in Table 1 below for reference.

Table 1

	Crisis Loan Items	Crisis Loan Living Expenses	Community Care Grants
Number of Awards	320	3420	960
Single / couple			
Lone Parent	12%	15%	27%
Not a Lone Parent	71%	68%	39%
Unknown	17%	17%	35%
Children			
Child aged up to and including 5	10%	11%	21%
Child aged 6 to 8	3%	2%	4%
Child aged 9 to 12	3%	2%	4%
Child aged 13 to 16	1%	1%	2%
No children	84%	84%	69%
Age			
Claimant aged under 18	0%	0%	0%
Claimant aged 18 to 24	24%	25%	12%
Claimant aged 25 to 34	29%	30%	24%
Claimant aged 35 to 44	22%	22%	21%
Claimant aged 45 to 54	19%	18%	21%
Claimant aged 55 to 64	5%	4%	11%
Claimant aged 65 to 69	1%	0%	3%
Claimant aged 70 to 79	0%	0%	6%
Claimant aged 80 to 89	0%	0%	1%
Claimant aged 90 and over	0%	0%	0%
Claimant age unknown	0%	0%	0%
Gender			
Couple	2%	3%	7%
Female	32%	33%	48%
Male	66%	64%	45%

- 3.2 The core methodologies applied for the consultation were intended to facilitate a qualitative and quantitative picture to be determined of current Social Fund customers as well as to obtain the views of residents and other stakeholders on the options for delivering the new Local Welfare Assistance service.
- 3.3 There are currently approximately 7,200 customers that access the existing Social Fund scheme via the Job Centre Plus offices.
- 3.4 A consultation is almost always partial as non-users of services and those perceived as least affected by the proposed change are less likely to get involved. However, given the above and the other caveats indicated within this report, the data gathered from the consultation, including the questionnaire responses may be used to assist and inform the development of the service offer.
- 3.5 Analysis of the specific answers received and comments submitted provides evidence of customer views and needs in relation to Local Welfare Assistance services.
- 3.6 The Local Welfare Assistance Scheme service offer will outline the ways in which those needs are to be met and advantages of these for both individuals and the wider community.

4.0 Methodology

- 4.1 A range of approaches were used to capture responses to the proposals for the Council's Local Welfare Assistance Scheme as set out below:
- All consultation documentation including the questionnaire was available on Brent Council's Consultation Tracker website - www.brent.gov.uk/consultation,
 - Meetings were held with Job Centre Plus representatives from Willesden and Harlesden where Social Fund payments are currently issued to claimants,
 - A pop up screen outlining the nature of the consultation and how to access the online consultation documentation was activated each time one of the Brent public library PC's was accessed by a customer. During the consultation period, there were 3,464 customer sessions where this message was displayed,
 - Letters outlining the consultation arrangements were sent by post / email to 42 organisations including Housing Associations with a property interest in the Borough, welfare organisations, the Police and Probation Service and interest groups to inform them of the nature of the consultation and how they may access the consultation documentation,

- Letters outlining the consultation arrangements were sent by email to 174 voluntary organisation representatives on 12th December 2012 informing them of the nature of the consultation and how they may access the consultation documentation,
- Letters outlining the consultation arrangements and how to access the consultation documentation were also sent to the three Brent MP's and Chamber of Commerce,
- Council officers engaged with 22 Social Fund customers collecting their Crisis Loan payments from Harlesden and Willesden Job Centre Plus offices over a four day period.

5.0 Consultation Responses – Analysis

- 5.1 The format of the questionnaire used for the consultation is shown in Appendix A1 of this report.
- 5.2 This was made available on the Council's Consultation Tracker throughout the consultation period and printed copies of the document were distributed to customers visiting the Job Centre Plus offices to obtain their Social Fund payment. Printed copies were also available upon request and were available from Brent Council libraries and Customer Services Local Offices.
- 5.3 There were 28 consultation questionnaire responses received, comprising 7 online responses (25%) and 21 paper responses (75%).
- 5.4 The consultation questionnaire response rate is low although recent experience from the Council Tax Support consultation carried out would appear to suggest that this is not unique to this consultation. Comments were also received from Job Centre Plus offices at Willesden and Harlesden.
- 5.5 Table 2 below shows the analysis of ethnic groups obtained from the consultation questionnaire responses compared to that of the Brent population based upon 2011 census data.

Table 2

Ethnicity from 2011 census data	% Census Composition	% Consultation Composition
White Total		
White: English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	17.96	30.43
White: Irish	3.96	4.35
White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0.10	0
White: Other White	14.25	0
Mixed Total		
Mixed/multiple ethnic group: White and Black Caribbean	1.38	8.7
Mixed/multiple ethnic group: White and Black African	0.91	4.35
Mixed/multiple ethnic group: White and Asian	1.17	0
Mixed/multiple ethnic group: Other Mixed	1.61	4.35
Asian Total (2011 definition)		
Asian/Asian British: British	Not Applicable	4.35
Asian/Asian British: Indian	18.64	0
Asian/Asian British: Pakistani	4.62	0
Asian/Asian British: Bangladeshi	0.56	0
Asian/Asian British: Chinese	1.04	0
Asian/Asian British: Other Asian	9.19	4.35
Black Total		
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Caribbean	7.62	0
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: African	7.84	13.04

Ethnicity from 2011 census data	% Census Composition	% Consultation Composition
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Other Black	3.38	8.70
Black Somali	Not applicable	8.70
Other Total (2011 definition)		
Other ethnic group: Arab	3.67	0
Prefer not to say	Not Applicable	4.35
Other ethnic group: Any other ethnic group	2.09	4.35
Totals	100.00	100.00

Notes: There were 5 respondents that did not answer this question.

“Black:Somali” has been shown as a separate group for the purposes of the consultation responses although in the census this group is likely to have been incorporated within Black:African.

“Asian:British” has been shown as a separate group for the purposes of the consultation responses although in the census this group is likely to have been incorporated within one of the other “Asian” groups.

Table 2 shows how the proportions of each group as represented by the Borough population compare to that obtained from the consultation responses received. This appears to indicate that White: Irish have the closest representation based upon the consultation responses to the 2011 census data. Table 3 below shows the overall Brent population based upon the 2011 census data.

Table 3

	2011	% Composition
All categories: Ethnic group	311215	100.00
White Total	112880	
White: English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	55887	17.96
White: Irish	12320	3.96
White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller	320	0.10
White: Other White	44353	14.25
Mixed Total	15775	
Mixed/multiple ethnic group: White and Black Caribbean	4291	1.38
Mixed/multiple ethnic group: White and Black African	2820	0.91
Mixed/multiple ethnic group: White and Asian	3642	1.17
Mixed/multiple ethnic group: Other Mixed	5022	1.61
Asian Total (2011 definition)	105986	
Asian/Asian British: Indian	58017	18.64
Asian/Asian British: Pakistani	14381	4.62
Asian/Asian British: Bangladeshi	1749	0.56
Asian/Asian British: Chinese	3250	1.04
Asian/Asian British: Other Asian	28589	9.19
Black Total	58632	
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Caribbean	23723	7.62
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: African	24391	7.84
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Other Black	10518	3.38
Other Total (2011 definition)	17942	
Other ethnic group: Arab	11430	3.67
Other ethnic group: Any other ethnic group	6512	2.09
TOTALS		100.00

Notes:

1. The "Chinese" sub-group was in the "Chinese or Other Ethnic Group" in 2001, and in 2011 is within the "Asian" group
2. Two new sub-groups have been added - "Gypsy or Irish Traveller" sub-group within "White"; and "Arab" within "Other Ethnic Group". It is assumed within the analysis that these would have been within the "White: Other" and "Chinese or Other Ethnic Group" respectively in the 2001 census data.

5.6 The following paragraphs set out the composition of respondents that completed the consultation questionnaire:

5.7 Status of Respondent

In relation to the status of the respondent, 26 were individuals, 2 were organisations and 0 did not declare a status.

- 5.8 Are you resident in the Brent Council area?**
Of the 24 responses received, 19 (i.e. 79.17% of those that responded to the question) indicated that they were resident in the Brent Council area and 5 (i.e. 20.83% of those that responded to question) were not.

There were 4 respondents that did not give an answer to this question.
- 5.9 Are you currently receiving a Social Fund Payment?**
Of the 24 respondents, 7 did not currently receive a Social Fund payment. (i.e.29.17% of those responding to the question).

There were 4 respondents that did not give an answer to this question where one was expected.
- 5.10 If not, have you ever received a Social Fund payment?**
Of the 7 respondents not currently receiving a Social Fund payment, 4 had previously received payments. (i.e.57% of those responding to the question).

There were no respondents that did not give an answer to this question when one was expected.
- 5.11 Are you currently receiving Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit in Brent?**

Of the 25 respondents, 10 were currently in receipt of Housing Benefit / Council Tax Benefit. (i.e.40% of those responding to the question).

There were 3 respondents that did not give an answer to this question.
- 5.12 Are you responding in your capacity as a representative of any of the following? (i.e. Voluntary Organisation, Housing Association, Landlord or Other)**

There were 2 respondents that were acting as a representative of a Voluntary Organisation, Housing Association, Landlord or Other.
- 5.13** The tables below set out the composition of respondents that completed the consultation questionnaire:

Table 4

Status of Respondent	Total Number of Responses	Responses as Proportion of Total (%)
Unemployed	17	70.83%
Employed	2	8.33%
Disabled	2	8.33%
Employed Part Time	2	8.33%
Student	1	4.17%
Total	24	100.00%

The overall response rate to this question was 85.71% of the total 28 respondents.

Table 5

Status of Respondent	Total Number of Responses	Responses as Proportion of Total (%)
Living as a Couple	0	0.00%
Married	1	14.29%
Civil Partnership	0	0.00%
Prefer not to say	6	85.71%
Total	7	100.00%

The overall response rate to this question was 25% of the total of 28 respondents. There were 21 respondents that didn't give an answer to this question representing 75% of the total 28 respondents.

- 5.14 An analysis of the age composition of the Borough in comparison to the consultation response is shown in Tables 6 and 7 below:

Table 6 – Borough Census

Census		
Age Range	Population Number	Population Percentage
0 – 4	22,400	7.20%
5 – 9	18,700	6.01%
10 – 14	18,000	5.78%
15 – 19	18,600	5.98%
20 – 24	24,200	7.78%
25 – 29	34,700	11.15%
30 – 34	30,200	9.70%
35 – 39	24,300	7.81%
40 – 44	21,700	6.97%
45 – 49	20,600	6.62%
50 – 54	18,500	5.94%
55 – 59	14,400	4.63%
60 – 64	12,300	3.95%
65 – 69	9,600	3.08%
70 – 74	8,400	2.70%
75 – 79	6,700	2.15%
80 – 84	4,400	1.41%
85 – 89	2,400	0.77%
90 and over	1,100	0.35%
Totals	311,200	100.00%

Table 7

Status of Respondent	Total Number of Consultation Responses	Responses as Proportion of Total (%)
Under 18	1	4 %
18 to 24	7	28%
25 to 34	5	20%
35 to 44	9	36%
45 to 54	3	12%
55 to 60	0	0.00%
61+	0	0.00%
Prefer not to say	0	0.00%
Totals	25	100.00%

The overall response rate to this question was 89.29% of the total of 28 respondents.

- 5.15 It is not possible to draw any specific conclusions from the above age data as the response from the consultation was small and not representative of the population of Brent as a whole.
- 5.16 It is also important to note that as the Local Welfare Assistance Scheme will generally only be available to applicants aged at least 16 and predominantly from the age of 18, the age analysis of the Borough that includes all age categories will not be applicable for any of the population aged less than 16.
- 5.17 It is not possible to draw any specific conclusions from the above age data obtained from the consultation as not all of the respondents answered this question and the overall response rate was low. It is also the case that most of the respondents were of working age having been interviewed at the Job Centre Plus offices when collecting their Social Fund payment.
- 5.18 It is also likely that as persons of pensionable age and those not available for work are less likely to visit Job Centre Plus offices, they will be less likely to be aware of the Social Fund and hence less likely to respond to the consultation proposals. This appears to be reflected by the age composition of the existing DWP caseload for the Social Fund shown in Table 1 of this appendix.

5.19 Gender Status

Table 8 below shows the gender status of residents in the Borough based upon the 2011 census data.

Table 8

Gender	Borough Average from 2011 Census
Male	50.29%
Female	49.71%

The profile of gender based upon the consultation responses is shown in Table 9 below.

Table 9 - Consultation Responses

Status of Respondent	Total Number of Responses	Responses as Proportion of Total (%)
Male	12	48%
Female	13	52%
Prefer not to say	0	0.00%
Total	25	100.00%

The overall response rate to this question was 89.29% of the total respondents.

5.20 It is not possible to draw any specific conclusions from the above results of the consultation as the overall response was small. However, the overall proportions from the responses that were obtained was broadly comparable to the Brent population as a whole.

5.21 **Is your gender identity the same as the gender you were assigned at birth?**

Table 10

Gender reassignment		
Status of Respondent	Total Number of Responses	Responses as Proportion of Total (%)
Same gender as at birth 'Yes'	22	95.65%
Same gender as at birth 'No'	1	4.35%
Prefer not to say	0	0.00%
Total	23	100.00%

The overall response rate to this question was 82.14% of the total 28 respondents. There were 5 respondents that did not give an answer to this question representing 17.86% of the total 21 respondents.

It is not possible to compare the data from the consultation responses with the Borough average as this information was not previously collated from the 2001 census and is not available in relation to the 2011 census.

5.22 Do you have Parenting Responsibilities?

Table 11

Parenting responsibilities		
Status of Respondent	Total Number of Responses	Responses as Proportion of Total (%)
Yes	10	45.45%
No	11	50%
Prefer not to say	1	4.55%
Total	22	100.00%

The overall response rate to this question was 78.57% of the total 28 respondents. There were 6 residents that did not give an answer to this question representing 21.43% of the total 28 respondents. It is not possible to compare this with the proposed scheme as the data for this does not currently exist.

5.23 What is your Sexual Orientation?

Table 12

Sexual Orientation		
Status of Respondent	Total Number of Responses	Responses as Proportion of Total (%)
Heterosexual	20	90.91%
Gay Woman / Lesbian	0	0.00%
Bisexual	0	0.00%
Gay Man	0	0.00%
Other	0	0.00%
Prefer not to say	2	9.09%
Total	22	100.00%

The overall response rate to this question was 78.57% of the total 28 respondents. There were 6 residents that did not give an answer to this question representing 21.43% of the total 28 respondents.

It is not possible to compare the data from the consultation responses with the Borough average as this information was not previously collated from the 2001 census and is not available in relation to the 2011 census.

5.24 What is your religion?

Tables 13 and 14 below set out the religion of residents in the Borough based upon the 2011 census data and consultation responses respectively.

Table 13

Religion	2011	Percentage
All People	311215	100.00
Christian	129080	41.48
Buddhist	4300	1.38
Hindu	55449	17.82
Jewish	4357	1.40
Muslim	58036	18.65
Sikh	1709	0.55
Any other religion	3768	1.21
No religion	33054	10.62
Religion not stated	21462	6.90

Table 14

Status of Respondent	Total Number of Responses	Responses as Proportion of Total (%)
Baha'i	0	0
Buddhist	0	0
Christian	5	25%
Hindu	1	5%
Jainism	0	0
Jewish	0	0
Muslim	4	20%

Status of Respondent	Total Number of Responses	Responses as Proportion of Total (%)
Sikh	0	0
Taoism	0	0
Agnostic	1	5%
Humanist	0	0
No Religious belief	5	25%
Other	3	15%
Prefer not to say	1	5%
Totals	20	100%

The overall response rate to this question was 71.43% of the total 28 respondents. There were 8 residents that did not give an answer to this question representing 28.57% of the total 28 respondents.

It is not possible to draw any specific conclusions regarding respondents' religion from the consultation response as not all respondents answered this question. However, from the responses received, there appears to be an over representation in comparison with census data from respondents who are either agnostic or have no religious belief. There also appears to be an under representation of Hindu and Christian respondents.

5.25 Responses to Consultation Questions concerning Scheme Design

Question 1: Please indicate how important each of the six key principles are to you with 1 being the most important and 6 the least important.

Respondents were asked to indicate how important each of the Council's six key principles was to them with 1 being the most important and 6 the least important.

Note: The lower the average ranking means the higher the average preference as shown in the overall order of priority below. The "Ranking Average" in brackets below shows the average ranking of importance for each of the 6 key principles concerned based upon responses received and indicates based upon the proportions of responses that principles 1 and 3 were most important to respondents. Principle 5 was the least important to respondents.

Key Principle	Overall Priority
Principle 1: Crisis Payments should be directed to those most in need	First (1.90)
Principle 2: Crisis Payments should not exceed their budget	Third (3.52)
Principle 3: Community Payments should be directed to those most in need	Second (2.71)
Principle 4: Community Payments should not exceed their budget	Fourth (3.76)
Principle 5: Wherever reasonably practicable, an award under the proposed scheme should be made other than by cash	Sixth (4.71)
Principle 6: There should be a provision for repayment of any awards made where fraudulent or applicant error occurs	Fifth (3.95)

The overall response rate to this question was 75% of the total 28 responses. There were 7 residents that didn't answer this question representing 25% of the total respondents.

5.26 Question 2: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following proposals are fair?

Principle 1 – Crisis Payments should be directed to those most in need

85.71 agreed that principle 1 was fair, 0% neither agreed nor disagreed and 14.29% considered the principle to be unfair. Each of the 28 respondents to

this question answered this part. The results for this principle indicate that this principle was perceived as fair by the majority of the respondents.

Principle 2 – Crisis Payments should not exceed their budget

78.57% agreed that the principle was fair, 3.57% neither agreed nor disagreed and 17.86% considered the principle to be unfair. Each of the 28 respondents to this question answered this part. The results for this principle indicate that this principle was perceived as fair by the majority of the respondents.

Principle 3 – Community Payments should be directed to those most in need

85.71% agreed that the principle was fair, 3.57% neither agreed nor disagreed and 10.71% considered the principle to be unfair. Each of the 28 respondents to this question answered this part. The results for this principle indicate that this principle was perceived as fair by the majority of the respondents.

Principle 4 – Community Payments should not exceed their budget

67.86% agreed that the principle was fair, 10.71% neither agreed nor disagreed and 17.86% considered the principle to be unfair. There was 1 respondent that answered the question for all other principles but did not answer this part of the question. The results for this principle indicate that this principle was perceived as fair by the majority of the respondents.

Principle 5 – Wherever reasonably practicable, an award under the proposed scheme should be made other than by cash

28.57% agreed that the principle was fair, 14.29% neither agreed nor disagreed and 57.14% considered the principle to be unfair. Each of the 28 respondents to this question answered this part. The results for this principle suggest that the majority of the respondents considered this principle to be unfair.

Principle 6 – There should be a provision for repayment of any awards made where fraudulent or applicant error occurs

82.14% agreed that the principle was fair, 14.29% neither agreed nor disagreed and 3.57% considered the principle to be unfair. Each of the 28 respondents to this question answered this part. The results for this principle suggest that this principle was perceived as fair by the majority of the respondents.

- 5.27 In summary, it can therefore be seen from the views expressed in the consultation that there was a general perception from the majority of respondents that the principles were fair except in terms of the provision of payments other than by cash.

- 5.28 In relation to principle 5 concerning the provision of payment by cash, it is important to note that each of the respondents concerned were existing Social Fund applicants who currently collect their payments in the form of a cheque at the Job Centre Plus offices. It is proposed within the Brent Local Welfare Assistance Scheme that there will, in certain and limited circumstances, be a provision for pre-paid cards to be converted to cash at an automatic teller machine (ATM) such as in circumstances where a card cannot be used for payment. This may occur for example in the case of prepaid meters for electricity. It is not therefore proposed that this provision be incorporated within the scheme.

6.0 Additional Comments

A narrative field for comments was included in questions asked within the questionnaire, and a range of responses were given for the questions concerned. It should be noted that whilst officers have tried to make this representative, inevitably there is the possibility of duplication and in some instances, comments that were not appropriate to the consultation. It should also be noted that some respondents provided multiple answers to questions with others giving no responses and in some instances it was unclear as to the nature of the point or comment being made by the respondent. Each of the comments submitted by respondents has been included within this report together with a commentary.

7.0 Service User Consultative Forums

7.1 Representatives of the Voluntary Sector Service User Consultative Forums were notified of the consultation and how to access the documentation by email. The forum for the voluntary sector focuses on specific groups in that sector of the community.

8.0 Meetings with groups and individuals

8.1 Meetings were arranged and held with Willesden and Harlesden Job Centre Plus representatives. Meetings were also offered to a number of other welfare and voluntary organisations although these were not taken up.

8.2 Meetings were also held with Social Fund claimants collecting their payments from Job Centre Plus offices.

8.3 Comments received and responses obtained from the consultation have been included within this report as Appendix A2 together with any appropriate commentary.

9.0 Summary of findings

9.1 Details about the consultation on the Local Welfare Assistance Scheme proposals reached a significant number of stakeholders and residents via a range of consultation formats as set out earlier in this report.

9.2 The overall response to the consultation was low despite the efforts made to ensure that residents and stakeholders were aware of the proposals and had an opportunity to comment.

9.3 However, it can be seen from the views expressed in the consultation that there was a majority support from the responses that were received in relation to the fairness of the key principles with the exception of principle 5 concerning entitlement payments being made other than by cash. This outcome appears to contrast with respondents ranking of importance for the same principle 5 in question 1 which was perceived to be of low importance from the consultation responses and possibly stems from a misunderstanding of the question concerning the ranking of the most important principles.

- 9.4 There also appears to be a clear distinction that principle 5 (payments to be made other than by cash) is not perceived as fair by existing Social Fund or previous Social Fund applicants. As the respondents concerned are, or have been used to receiving a cheque for their payment, the use of a pre-paid card may not be perceived as a suitable replacement.
- 9.5 From the above consultation response results, it would appear that there is support from the majority of the respondents concerning the proposed scheme principles excepting making payments other than by cash. In this case, the response concerned appears to be particularly influenced by the fact that the respondents are both existing and former Social Fund applicants. However, as the overall response rate is low and the composition is not representative of the overall population of the Borough, due regard should be given to this fact accordingly.
- 9.6 The consultation report is a significant part of the information underpinning the proposals, but it does not stand alone. In particular, in formulating the recommendations, officers have had regard to:
- The resources available to the Council and the timescale within which the proposals will need to be implemented as well as the funds available,
 - The Equalities Impact Assessment which explicitly addresses any issues raised in this consultation,
 - The technical constraints that may exist in relation to the proposed technology for administration of the scheme.