THE "CALL IN" PERIOD FOR THIS SET OF MINUTES ENDS AT 12 NOON ON TUESDAY 20 JANUARY, 2009.

CABINET MEMBER - COMMUNITIES

MEETING HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, SOUTHPORT ON WEDNESDAY 7 JANUARY 2009

PRESENT: Councillor Porter

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Preston and Veidman

63. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

64. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

65. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 3 December, 2008 were confirmed as a correct record.

66. SEFTON COUNCIL'S DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME ANNUAL REVIEW

The Cabinet Member considered the report of the Sefton Equalities Partnership Director that explained that the Council had a specific duty to produce a Disability Equality Scheme and review its scheme on an annual basis. The report went on to provide information on the annual review of the scheme.

The Cabinet Member expressed the concern she shared with the hackney carriage and private hire drivers regarding disabled people gaining access to their services. She went on to suggest that where highway repairs were being routinely carried out, dropped kerbs could installed as part of the repairs. The Cabinet Member also suggested that the north of the borough be included in the projects that have proved beneficial to disabled people.

Further to Minute No.39 of the meeting held on 10 September 2008, the Cabinet Member commented on the importance of the Access Monitoring Officer and said that recruitment to the post should be dealt with as a matter of priority.

The Cabinet Member went on to commend the hard work undertaken by officers striving to deliver an effective equality scheme.

Attached as an annexe to the report was a copy of the Disability Equality Scheme action plan.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the progress made to date with regard to the Disability Equality Scheme be noted;

(2) the revised Disability Equality Scheme for Sefton, as detailed within the report and the action plan, be approved; and

(3) the Sefton Equalities Partnership Director be requested to include the north of the borough in the projects that have proved beneficial to disabled people.

67. MYSTERY SHOPPING DEVELOPMENT

The Cabinet Member considered the report of the Sefton Equalities Partnership Director that explained that as part of the programme to mainstream equality and diversity within the Council, Sefton Equalities Partnership would support and lead on the development of a Mystery Shopping Group. The Group would be made of up of disabled people and people with limiting long term illnesses from the ABILITY Network. The Group would test and report back on agreed services, which would enable services to improve and meet the needs of this under-represented group.

The Cabinet Member commented that whilst she supported the scheme, in principle, she would have to examine the financial details of the pilot before giving it her full endorsement.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the Mystery Shopper Development report be noted;

(2) the mystery shopping capacity building programme and pilot be approved in principle;

(3) the Corporate Equalities Group be requested to explore the potential of using the Mystery Shopping process, outlined within report, as part of the Council's quality assurance and user feedback processes; and

(4) the Sefton Equalities Partnership Director be requested to draft a further report, prior to the commencement of the mystery shopping pilot, containing the detailed costings of the proposed scheme.

68. SEFTON COUNCIL WEBSITE

The Cabinet Member considered the report of the Sefton Equalities Partnership Director that provided an update on access to Sefton Council's website by disabled people. The report went on inform that the Council had arranged for a demonstration by Browsealoud, a computer program that could read out all website content.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the Sefton Council Website report be noted; and

(2) the Sefton Equalities Partnership Director be requested to draft a further report containing the feedback from the Disability Networks and proposed costings for Browsealoud.

69. AREA COMMITTEE MEETING - MINUTES

The Cabinet Member considered the Minutes of the Area Committee detailed below:-

Southport held on 3 December, 2008

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Area Committee, as detailed above, be noted.