

THE CHARTERED INSTITUTE OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
Council Meeting – 4th September 2006
Report from the Chief Executive

OVERVIEW FROM WALES

1.0 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 This report summarises the activities and progress in ongoing projects in Wales being led by Julie Barratt since the last meeting of Council.

1.2 Council are recommended to note the report.

2.0 DETAILS

- 2.1 In September the Director was successful in obtaining funding from the Welsh Assembly Government to provide £35,000 to fund a piece of research into levels of Environmental Tobacco Smoke in premises before and after the ban on smoking in public places, due to come into force in Wales on 2nd April 2007. The Terms of Reference for the project have been agreed, and sampling work has commenced. The research will compare ETS levels in anumber of different types of premises including pubs and restaurants, but also including premises such as Bookmakers and Supermarket cafeterias. The same premises will be sampled 12 months after the commencement of the ban, so that comparisons can be made. Similar work is proposed in Northern Ireland which will allow for comparison between the Principality and the Province, which will also bring in its ban in April 2007.
- 2.2 Unlike the position in England the Welsh Assembly Government has made all of the funding for promoting the ban on smoking in public places available to local authorities. It has however indicated to the local authorities that they should spend some of the money on staff training and development, and has further appointed CIEH as the preferred training deliverer. At the time of writing 5 courses have been arranged covering all of Wales and a further is in the process of being arranged. By April CIEH will have trained in excess of 400 enforcement officers in Wales in anticipation of the ban. Training materials generated in Wales have also been used for the training courses in England and in Northern Ireland.
- 2.3 Since the last meeting of Council CIEH has been asked to join two Ministerial Groups. The first has been established by the Deputy Health and Social Services Minister, and membership of the group was at his invitation. It is a high level strategy group and is considering how the ban on smoking in public places will be implemented. It is reporting to the First Minister in March 2007. The second is a multi-disciplinary task group looking at climate change in Wales. It is headed by the Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside. It will also report to the First Minister in March 2007.
- 2.4 CIEH in Wales is presently developing the second volume of the successful 'Environmental Health contributions to Health Challenge Wales' Tool Kit. It will be launched at the Public Health : Everyone's Agenda Conference on 28th February and 1st March 2007 by the Chief Medical Officer for Wales. The development of the tool kit has been supported by the Welsh Assembly Government Health Challenge Wales Team, which has provided a £5,000 contribution to the costs.
- 2.5 There is considerable concern in Wales that the role and function of environmental health in delivering the public health agenda is not understood by the public, neither is the contribution of environmental health to quality of life recognised or valued. In order to determine the level of understanding and the role and function of environmental health and to determine the value attached to it the Director has commissioned a study that will report in January 2007 and will be launched the Public Health : Everyone's Agenda Conference. The study asks members of the public what they understand by the term environmental health and what service they consider it includes. It also seeks to find out what contribution they consider it plays in their lives and whether they feel that the service is important to them, the health of their families and to the environment. It also asks their feelings on who should deliver environmental health and how it should be delivered. The findings of the work will direct the development of a communication strategy for Wales based around addressing he misconceptions that the public have about environmental health and building on those things that they say they value. It will also furnish us with information to support the profession in Wales, and to argue the importance of the service in the budget round and with politicians at national and local level.
- 2.6 The Director is also working with Heads of Environmental Health in Wales on a study of the effect on service delivery of audits, inspections and studies on environmental health departments by both

external agencies and by the local authority concerned. The work particularly seeks to establish whether the audits etc cause service disruption and distortion and if so whether any benefit derived from the audits is proportional to the disruption caused and whether any quantifiable benefit to public health is generated by them. The report should be completed by the end of December 2006, and will provide an evidence base when we are arguing against externally imposed inspection regimes and collection of externally generated performance indicators.

- 2.7 It was noted in the report to Council of 4th September that the Director was in discussion with a number of parties in Wales in respect of the DTI Retail Enforcement Pilot, and whether such a project was appropriate for Wales. The work has progressed, and the group has come to the view that the project, as taken forward in England does not fit the needs of Wales due to the different organisational structure and collaborative arrangements that exist. The group has however recognised that limited part of the project may be beneficial and work is on going to determine how these may be used to best advantage. CIEH continue to be involved in the work, and in the proposed development of a similar project for farm sites.
- 2.8 Since the last meeting of Council the Director has made a number of appearance in the media, including a number of television interviews relating to smoking in public places and engaged in a live 30 minute radio debate discussion health and safety around the theme of the UK becoming a risk averse society. She has also made a number of contributions, including comments on the proposed ban on junk food, noisy neighbours, sun beds and the need for hand washing by doctors. She has also carried out a number of newspaper reviews on Good Morning Wales and has made contributions to Caterer and Hotelkeeper magazine on environmental health related topics. She also attended a dinner at University of Cardiff Institute Wales where the Chief Medical Officer outlined his vision of public health in Wales and was invited to meet the Directors of LACORS for dinner after their meeting in Cardiff.

3.0 IMPLICATIONS

Financial:	Within existing resources
Personnel:	Within existing resources
Legal:	None
Environmental:	None
Equal Opportunities:	None
Public Relations:	None
Public Health:	None
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer:	Director CIEH Wales.