

Overview from CIEH Wales

Meeting of Council

6th September 2007

Report from Graham Jukes, Chief Executive

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 is recommended to note the report.

2.0 Detail

- 2.1 Since the last meeting of Council Wales the elections to the Welsh Assembly Government have been held, on May 3rd. Initially the result of the election provided for a minority labour administration, however the First Minister conceded that government with such a minority was unlikely to be a practical proposition, and sought to put in place a coalition government. The debate that followed over a period of 7 weeks threw up a number of possibilities; however the final coalition is between Labour and Plaid Cymru, Labour holding the post of First Minister and 6 Cabinet posts, Plaid Cymru holding the post of Deputy First Minister and 2 Cabinet posts. This is the first experience that Wales has had of coalition government, hence it remains to be seen how successful it will be in practice. The change in portfolios that has been made to accommodate new Ministers and the change in Ministers holding those portfolios however will require new relationships to be forged; the Director is currently working in this regard.
- 2.2 The implementation of the ban on smoking in public places in Wales, which came into force on 2nd April 2007, has been very successful. Public acceptance of the ban has been high and there have been relatively few enforcement incidents. Public interest in the ban remains high, as does media coverage of it. The Director has taken part in a number of live radio phone-ins answering questions about the ban and its implementation and continues to handle media inquiries directed to CIEH by the Welsh Assembly Government. The Director was also invited to attend a bilateral meeting of officials from the Welsh Assembly Government and the Northern Ireland Assembly post implementation to discuss matters of mutual

concern relating to the ban and its implementation. Of particular value was the insight from Wales into the arguments advanced to the All Party Committee that considered the ban in Wales in respect of the proposed exemption for performers smoking on stage, which was resisted and eventually not include in the legislation for Wales.

- 2.3 At the suggestion of the Office of the Chief Medical Officer for Wales the Director has been asked to give a paper at the 'Towards a Smoke Free Society' Conference in Edinburgh on 10th and 11th September, and also to take part in a round table discussion about implementation and enforcement of the ban in various EU member states. This activity raises the profile of the CIEH and also underlines the role we have played in lobbying for the ban and in bringing about its successful implementation.
- 2.4 The Wales Healthy Options Award, an award recognising provision of healthy food choices was launched at the 'Public Health: Everyone's Agenda' Conference in February 2007. The award is now being piloted by a number of local authorities in Wales, and further, bids were invited for an evaluation project looking at the suitability for use of the documents that have been designed to accompany the Award. CIEH was successful in being awarded the project which, given the nature of the partnership that exists for the design and implementation of the award is being conducted on a cost-only basis. As CIEH is not involved in the delivery of the project once it goes live our carrying out of this project work allows us to maintain our influence in respect of it and to continue to engage in the partnership. The project commenced in July and will be completed in January 2008.
- 2.5 On 28 and 29th June CIEH Wales Directorate hosted the first Tripartite meeting between the Heads of Environmental Health Groups from Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales, the Chief Environmental Health Advisors from the respective legislatures and the Regional Directors for Wales and Northern Ireland. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss devolved issues of mutual interest and concern and to share experience, detail of initiatives and best practice. This was the first occasion that the group had met and it was considered to be a very useful meeting, which the parties proposed to repeat on an annual basis to consider strategic issues of importance to the devolved administration. It is also proposed to set up tripartite Task and Finish groups to consider specific issues as and when the need may arise.
- 2.6 The Welsh Assembly Government has established a Cross Sector Climate Change Group, under the direct control of the Minister for Sustainability and Housing. CIEH has been invited to be a member of the group, and also of the Adaption Sub Group. The remit of the group is to consider ways in which Wales can reduce its Carbon Footprint and to promote sustainable development, thereby reducing its impact on climate change. In the light of the recent flooding incidents it will also consider ways in which the effects of climate extremes can be ameliorated. Membership of the group is at the invitation of the Minister, hence this is a very prestigious invitation and one that we will be taking up. The first meeting of the group took place on 15th August when the action plan for the group was drawn up.

- 2.7 On 15th and 16th September the Abergavenny Food Festival takes place in South Wales. In 2006 the Festival had a footfall of 35,000 and over 100 media reports nationally and internationally. For the 2007 Festival CIEH Wales Directorate has agreed to sponsor the Primary School Children's Cookery Competition, which sponsorship will have £1,750. As sponsor of the competition CIEH cited in the festival brochure which is provided to all attendees, is given a free exhibition place and has a number of high profile media opportunities, as well as having an input into the design of the competition. Over 300 children aged between 9 and 10 took part in the first round of the competition which was a paper exercise and required them to design a healthy lunch box menu. The two winners from each of the 9 participating schools were invited to take part in a semi final cook-off where they prepared the lunch box menu they had designed. This was a high profile media event, and was judged by a local celebrity chef and the Director CIEH Wales. Judging was based on cookery skills demonstrated, taste, knowledge of food hygiene and awareness of healthy food principles. The 3 finalists proceed to a live cook off on the final day of the festival to be compeered by Angela Hartnett of the Connaught Grill and judged by the Director Wales and Franco Taruschio, previously of the Walnut Tree, Abergavenny. The final event is extensively covered in the media. The CIEH exhibition stand will promote the food hygiene training courses that we offer, as well as highlighting food related campaigns we have run. After the festival closes we will review the benefit that has accrued to CIEH as the result of the sponsorship and determine whether to take up the opportunity again in 2008.
- 2.8 The period since the last meeting of Council has been particularly busy in respect of the media. On the night of 3rd May, being election night the Director was invited to attend a live broadcast in the Senydd, commenting on the results as they came in and opining as to what impact the merging government of Wales was likely to have on those matters on which CIEH has campaigned. As noted in paragraph 1 there was no clear result on the night, however the opportunity to repeat many of our concerns was taken. The Director has taken part in 2 one hour live radio phone-ins on the smoking ban, given papers at the Connect4Health and the Smoke Free Cheshire Conferences, contributed to the Global Health Strategy for Wales round table debate and provide media information in relation to the sponsorship of the Abergavenny Food Festival Competition, in addition to the regular media broadcasts she undertakes.

3.0 Implications

Environmental	None specific
Equal opportunities	None specific
Financial	Within existing resources
Legal	None specific
Personnel	Within existing resources
Public health	None specific
Public relations	None specific
Background papers	None
Contact officer	Julie Barratt, Director CIEH Wales, j.barratt@cieh.org

