

# Overview from Northern Ireland

## Council meeting

17 April 2008

Report from Graham Jukes, Chief Executive

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### 1.0 Summary and recommendations

- 1.1 This report summarises the activities and progress in ongoing projects in N. Ireland being led by Gary McFarlane since the last meeting of Council.
- 1.2 This report should be read in conjunction with the 2008 business plan for N. Ireland.
- 1.2 Council are recommended to note the report.

### 2.0 Detail

- 2.1 Finalisation of the research study commenced in March 2007 to evaluate the effectiveness of the smokefree legislation on indoor air quality. It is anticipated that the research paper/report will be launched late April/early May to coincide with the introduction of the smokefree legislation in NI 1 year ago. This will be the first piece of work to provide feedback on the impact of the intervention and with indoor air quality improved in the region of 100% tells a very positive story. It is hoped that the work will attract significant media interest and indeed the launch event is being constructed in such a way as to maximise this.
- 2.2 Following on from the Food Poverty Report launched in November 2007 and a presentation to the NI Food Standards Advisory Board, the director met with the CMO in NI in order to discuss some of the implications for future food policy and in particular the need for more local authority engagement with the food manufacturing and catering sectors in influencing food composition and makeup. A follow on proposal will be forwarded to the CMO as a result of that discussion.
- 2.3 The director also met with Dr Martin Caraher from the University of London, a leading authority in this topic area. It is hoped to develop a portfolio of innovative interventions from around the UK (and wider if possible or relevant) that are currently contributing to this agenda and potentially use these to develop robust

proposals and a possible model for the future which might incorporate the concept of Health Impact Assessment. This could and should in turn be used to inform future FSA policy direction. Jenny Morris, CIEH Principal Policy Officer, is also involved in these discussions since clearly there are national implications.

- 2.4 Following on from the Health Ministers proposals for future health reforms (as part of the ongoing review of Public Administration) the director has been developing the CIEH position paper on the proposed changes. There is a considerably enhanced role for local government contained within the current draft proposals and forthcoming consultation as well as great potential for the establishment of environmental health practitioner posts within the new proposed Regional Public Health Agency for NI. This reflects the considerable input that CIEH has made to this process over the last few years.
- 2.5 Ongoing participation in the Climate Change Coalition in NI which CIEH are members of. This has involved various seminars targeted at MLAs and held at Stormont.
- 2.6 The director participated, by request, in a briefing to the Chair of the Assembly Committee of the Centre on the progress with sustainable development in NI.
- 2.7 Input to the current review of planning policy in NI through the stakeholder engagement process instigated by the Minister for the Environment.
- 2.8 Participation in and input to the newly established Environmental Health Advisory Board for the undergraduate programme at UUU. The director also provided a presentation at the academic staff update conference in January and has provided direct input to final year students undertaking case study based assignments at the University's request.
- 2.9 During this period the director was approached by an employer seeking professional environmental health input to a selection process for a senior environmental health appointment. This is the first time CIEH has received such a request and is, I believe, further evidence of the growing profile and professional credibility of the organisation in the region.
- 2.10 The Director has also been involved in ongoing input into the public health workforce development work in N. Ireland and nationally.
- 2.11 Further work to gather potential case study material to support the public health advocacy model and toolkit developed by the Public Health Alliance.
- 2.12 The Director has had ongoing informal discussions with the chair of EHOA with a view to strengthening collaboration between the 2 professional organisations on the island of Ireland. It is intended to hold regular meetings in order to work collaboratively on joint policy issues as well as further develop opportunities for training and professional development between and across the memberships.

### 3.0 Implications

Environmental	None
Equal opportunities	None
Financial	Within existing or anticipated/planned budgets
Legal	None
Personnel	None
Public health	None
Public relations	None

Background papers Available from G. McFarlane, Director NI  
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