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Health

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING / MEMBERS FORUM OF THE LONDON REGION
INTERIM MANAGEMENT BOARD**

**24TH MAY 2007
CAMDEN TOWN HALL**

CHAIR'S REPORT FOR 2006

The Interim Management Board for the London Region was elected during the Final Annual General Meeting to wind up the former Greater London Centre held on 16th February 2006. It held its inaugural meeting on the same date and has met on four other occasions during the year.

In addition to its normal business meetings the Management Board was represented at the twice yearly Region, SIG's, Branch Secretaries and Treasurers Meetings held in London in July and November 2006.

The Development of the Region/SIG Structure, The Local Government White Paper – Strong and Prosperous Communities and its implications in relation to how environmental health services might be delivered in the future, the roll out of the CIEH's re-branding project, the new Accredited Associate grade of membership of the CIEH, proposals to encourage the re-admission of lapsed members back into membership of the CIEH, changes to the core curriculum and improving service to customers and members by way of a new Customer Relations Project were among the matters discussed at these meetings

The Assistant Secretary also represented the London Region at three meetings of "The Forum" which is the name now used by the Enlarged Implementation Task Group. This is the CIEH body responsible for overseeing the Centre and Branch reorganisation process. Representatives of every Region, SIG and Branch are invited to attend and the Forum, in July this year will have the task of evaluating the Business Plans prepared by the Regions and SIG's against a standardised template. It will make recommendations to the Resources Board of the CIEH as to the appropriate level of funding to support the activities and programme of membership events set out in the Business Plans.

To this end the major task undertaken by the London Region, Interim Management Board during 2006 has been the preparation of the Region's Business Plan. The activities and planned events for which funding will be requested over and above a core level of financial support allocated to every Region and SIG, partly based on membership numbers, has been based on the results of various membership surveys carried out by the CIEH early in 2006 and previously by the Greater London Centre Council and the Association of London Environmental Health Managers (ALEHM).

As the largest Region in the CIEH, with approximately 1320 members, the response to the CIEH survey from the London's membership was frankly very disappointing with only 108 replies representing less than a 10% return.

Despite the poor level of response, it was evident from this and the previous surveys referred to, that the provision of low cost training to maintain professional competence and satisfy CPD requirements and lobbying were identified as key issues for members in the London Region. The London Region Business Plan seeks to provide a full programme of training and other events either through its Study Group structure or arranged centrally to meet the needs identified by its members.

The Region and SIG Business Plans will be evaluated at the next meeting of the Forum being held on 17th July. The current draft of the London Region Business Plan is available for viewing on the London Region web pages of the CIEH main internet site. I would request members take the time to look at it and we would welcome any suggestions or comments before the 15th June. This will allow ample time for any changes to be made before the 30th June when the final draft has to be submitted to the CIEH.

At last February's inaugural meeting, Sharon Smith, the newly appointed London Region Policy Officer and ex-officio a members of the LRMB spoke on how she saw her role developing and the priorities she had identified in particular establishing and building relationships with bodies and organisations where environmental health was poorly represented or had no active voice. Through the year, Sharon has worked on examining the relationships, develop a strategy and work programme and has set out a Vision for the London Region, which defines the London Objectives for 2007 and sets these within the context of a work programme. Sharon's input has been fundamental to the work of the Management Board and it is with great regret that we recently learnt that due to family relocation Sharon would be leaving the employ of the CIEH later this year. On behalf of the London Region Management Board and all the Members of the London Region I would like to place on record our grateful thanks for all she has achieved during her tenure as the London Region Policy Officer and to wish her every success in the future.

We hope that the opportunity for Sharon to continue to contribute to the work of the Region will also be possible once she has relocated with her family.

During 2006, the London Region Management Board has strengthened its links with ALEHM. Steve Miller our President is currently the Chair of ALEHM and a Trustee for the London Region and Keith Hill, Co-ordinator of ALEHM attends our meetings as an appointed ex-officio member of the Management Board.

With many emerging issues relating to London where we both have an interest, such as the recruitment and retention of professional staff, Scores on Doors, the Mayor of London's Housing Strategy and only five year away, the London Olympics, it is vital that we have an efficient exchange of information to ensure that our respective business plans do not conflict but complement each other.

2007 will be a year of fundamental change in the status and way ALEHM will function in the future and we look forward to another year of working closely with them.

The London Region is twinned with the Centre for Communicable Disease Control, Atlanta, USA and the Jamaican Association of Public Health Inspectors.

In October 2006, Andrew Banfield, a former President of the CIEH and current President of the Royal Society for the Promotion of Health and Carlene Thomas, a Trustee for the London Region, both members of the LRMB accepted an invitation to attend and represent the London Region and CIEH at the 60th Anniversary Conference of the Jamaican Association of Public Health Inspectors

Andrew and Carlene presented papers at the Conference and during their visit, they had the opportunity to speak with a number of high and influential persons in Jamaica including the Minister of Health and the Chief Public Health Inspector. Andrew and Carlene reported that during their visit they had been shown great courtesy and hospitality.

A revised Memorandum of Understanding between the London Region and the JAPHI has been drafted and is awaiting signature. Andrew and Carlene believed that the aspirations of the JAPHI to change their designation to that of Environmental Health Officers might have been helped by their visit.

The JAPHI have modelled themselves on some aspects of the CIEH including the need to meet CPD requirements. They have had problems recruiting students and two officers have been killed in the line of duty with others threatened with violence.

Andrew Banfield spoke movingly of the trip he and Carlene made to Jamaica and of the overwhelming hospitality, they had received. He told the meeting of a situation he discovered of 30 students studying for a Masters in Public Health where they were working / studying for something like 18 hours a day for a year.

Some of these students are reduced to sleeping on floors because of their lack of funding. He urged the meeting to do the best we could to help them. He asked any members of the London Region planning a trip to Jamaica to contact him and he would be pleased to provide contact details with the JAPHI so we could continue build on our partnership with them.

The JAPHI need a lot of support and we can help achieve this by exchanging information, sharing examples of best practice with them, and where possible by sponsoring places for members of the JAPHI at CIEH conferences.

Andrew and Carlene thought that their visit fully confirmed that the JAPHI was entirely the right organisation to link with the London Region and the London Region intends to take forward the seven action points set out in their Briefing Paper and Report Back of their visit which the LRMB considered at its meeting on 27th November 2006 .

The London Region International Interests representatives look forward to contributing to the work of the International Interests SIG which has recently been formed to look at the wider issues of how we link with the International Federation of Environmental Health, the sister organisations within the federation, and how we can establish connections with countries which aren't currently in the IFEH. The focus will be on developing countries, obviously Africa, but also Southeast Asia and South America.

The SIG also aim to encourage good practice and open up funding opportunities.

The Study Groups were active during the year. The London Food Study Group held a CPD event in February 2006 and other meetings and the Health and Safety, Housing and Pollution Study Groups held regular meetings providing no-cost CPD opportunities for the London membership. As evidence of our closer working relationship with ALEHM a new Joint ALEHM / London Region Housing Study Group, Regulatory Sub Group has recently been formed which will now represent the housing professionals in London in their relationship with the newly established private sector housing team at LACORS.

The London Region continues to support the Joint Centres, now Joint Regions Study Course, which, in previous years with the SE Centre has organised and provided very successful two-day seminars at Guildford.

The 2007 study course was particularly interesting as papers were delivered dealing with more unusual aspects of environmental health, the aftermath of the 7/7 bombings and the Polonium 210 incident.

The LRMB continues to struggle with the significant problem of being able to communicate effectively with the London Membership. After discounting the circulation of information by post due to the very high costs and labour involved, attempts to email newsletters and other information to members using the CIEH's central membership database has confirmed that many of the addresses listed are out of date or wrong. The bounce backs received when we email the London Membership can be counted in the many hundreds.

The Membership Section of the CIEH is aware of the problem and the LRMB has pressed the CIEH for this to be urgently rectified. The current difficulties will be addressed in part as the improvements to and functionality of the CIEH and Regional websites introduced as part of the CRM project are rolled out.

We ask that all members of the London Region make every effort to ensure their email and postal address contact details are up to date by using the facility to do this on the CIEH website and ensuring that the changes section of the annual subscription renewal notice is also completed and returned to the CIEH.

We are considering buying in additional administrative support to enable the LRMB to undertake its own overhaul of the London membership database during 2007. Meanwhile we will use a variety of methods to communicate with the membership including via the Study Groups, the continued use of email, by posting information on the website and by inserting notices in the Letters and Letters / Information and the Events pages of EHN.