

## **Management Board Meeting Minutes 24 February 2020**

**Attendance:** Secretary General (Fergal Lynch), Bernie McNally, Dermot Ryan, Laura McGarrigle and Conor Rowley. Stephen Burke reporting.

**POs Attending:** Dara Breathanach and Marie Kennedy.

### **1. Minutes of Last Meeting**

The minutes of meeting of 28 January and Away Day session on 10 February were agreed subject to amendments.

### **2. Matters Arising**

FL reported that, in line with the commitment to draw upon the experience and knowledge of the SMT, James Gibbs is drawing together a sub-group of SMT members to assist in the consideration of issues relating to the records of the Commission on Mother and Baby Homes and the database generated by the Commission during the course of its work.

### **3. Educational Welfare Services**

David Logan and Owen Magnier attended for this item and gave a presentation on the Draft Policy Blueprint for the future development of the Tusla Education Support Services, developed by a Task Force established by the Minister. DL outlined the aims of the service, in terms of improved attendance, participation and retention, and also detailed Tusla's Alternative Education Registration and Assessment Service (AERS) relating to children who receive education outside of a recognised school.

It was noted that the AERS presented particular challenges and risks for Tusla, given that it was outside the DES-regulated education system. In relation to TESS, it comprises the Educational Welfare Service, Home School Liaison Programme and School Completion Programme. All three elements required further development, and it was noted that resources for the SCP had been held static in recent years.

The actions proposed to develop and improve TESS in a wider context were addressed in the draft Blueprint and in particular it was noted that the HSLP and SCP would be re-purposed using the Boston College City Connects model, with funding from the North East Inner City Initiative.

The MB welcomed the work done to date and noted that the Blueprint would be finalised shortly, for submission to an incoming Minister and Government. The following points were made in the discussion that followed, and which would be taken into account as appropriate in finalising the text of the Blueprint:

- The reforms in the TESS and AERS area were very important, and represented the beginning of a substantial process. Implementation of the reforms could represent a test case in how the wider *Reform 2020* was to be progressed.

- It would be very important to join up the work of TESS, AERS, Early Learning and Care and School Age Childcare, youth services and the forthcoming youth justice strategy. Integration of approach to policy development and working would be vital.
- While much effort had been put into resolving the employment status of those in the SCP, it remained an issue of concern. The Blueprint included an action to develop a redesigned SCP that would deal with governance, standardisation of workforce, and related matters.
- While there could be an argument for DES assuming responsibility for all or part of TESS, a conscious policy decision had been made to transfer it to Tusla, and DCYA should press ahead on this basis.
- It was agreed that it would be valuable to have an SMT input to this area. CR and DL would reflect on all of the points made at the MB discussion and on how best the SMT contribution could be harnessed in the context of finalising the Blueprint.

#### **4. Civil Service Renewal**

BMcN introduced papers from the CSMB in relation to the future of the civil service in Ireland, and a 10-year vision and strategy for the Civil Service, which had been circulated prior to the meeting. She gave a brief background to the process and current status, and establishment of an IDG by DPER to help formulate the plan. SGs had already been consulted, and Departments were now being asked to get the views on the proposed outline approach from management boards and Principal Officers.

Those present offered feedback on what was proposed, with particular reference to themes and areas of focus for the new strategy. In particular, issues relating to innovation, leadership, public perception of the civil service, and the long-term structure of the civil service were raised. BMcN undertook to summarise the issues raised and to feed them back to the group as requested. She would also copy the MB for information.

#### **5. Strategic Discussion/ Away Day meeting: follow up**

Ger Hughes attended for this part of the meeting. The MB reviewed the outcome of the strategic 'away' day meeting of 10 February. The consensus was that the discussions had been very useful and that there was a need to allocate time to these discussions as the Department continued its consideration of the future. A focus on specific decision-making would be important for future sessions, although it was accepted that the discussion on 10 February was intended to allow room for as much airing of views and initial exploration of issues as possible.

There was a discussion on a number of aspects of the reform programme, including the nature of and approach to 'sizing', a term that it was agreed should no longer be used because of its association with separate matters of up-grading and IR issues.

In terms of next steps, it was agreed that a rigorous prioritisation process was needed at unit and divisional level, which would then be brought to the MB. Each MB member was asked to critically assess the schemes and projects currently ongoing in their respective divisions, and to prioritise in relation to importance, timeline, and necessary resources.

It was confirmed that an MB meeting to deal with HR issues, many of which were of relevance to the strategic discussions, would be held on Thursday 5 March at 2.30, and that the Programme Board for *Reform 2020* would meet for the first time on Monday 9 March, replacing the ordinary MB meeting scheduled for that day.

## **6. For Noting**

The following items were noted by the MB:

- (i) Expenditure Return Narrative Note January 2020

## **7. AOB**

It was agreed that MB members and the SG would formally sign off on the Department's latest draft Child Safeguarding Statement, an update of which was required by 11 March.

The MB congratulated the team responsible for the Access & Inclusion Model (AIM) which recently won an award for Innovative Policy at the UN Zero Projects Awards in Vienna.

## **8. Next Meeting**

It was confirmed that the next meeting of the MB would take place on Thursday 5 March dealing with HR matters. The first meeting of the Programme Board for *Reform 2020* would take place on Monday 9 March, following the meeting of the Risk Committee.