

Management Board Meeting Minutes

(Held via Skype)

Monday 11 January 2021

Attendance: Secretary General (Fergal Lynch); Dermot Ryan; Carol Baxter; Laura McGarrigle, Conor Rowley and Anne-Marie Brooks. Miriam Kenna reporting.

POs attending: John Lohan and Olive McGovern

Apologies: Bernie McNally

1. Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of meeting of 14 December 2020 were agreed.

2. Matters Arising

FL said that the Minister is bringing the Final Report of the Commission on Mother and Baby Homes to Government on the 12 January 2021, seeking agreement to immediate publication.

FL said that he met with the Chief Whip on 5 January, and discussed the Department's legislative priorities for the Spring session of 2021. As agreed, the priorities would be the Bill to facilitate the transfer of the Educational Welfare Service to the Department of Education and the Parent's Leave Bill.

3. Review of National Development Plan (NDP)

Gordon Gaffney and Patricia Ballantine joined for this item. DR and GG outlined the background to the issue, noting that DPER had sought input from all Departments as part of a review of the NDP. MB members had provided initial material on their capital requirements under the NDP in the format set out by DPER. Finance Unit had comments and suggestions to make on these in advance of finalisation. There was a discussion of the three main areas involved – (i) Early Years, which featured in the existing NDP (ii) IPAS/direct provision, which had not generally been funded from capital in the past (and responsibility for which had just recently transferred to the Department) and (iii) Tusla, which had developed a significant estates strategy since decisions on the NDP were last taken.

Following a discussion it was agreed that relevant Divisions (EY, IPED, Tusla Governance) would complete and submit a final version of their material to Finance Unit by Friday 15 January. Finance Unit would email any queries/points of clarification to the Divisions. Finance Unit will prepare an overall response to DPER, for clearance by the Minister, to be issued by 21 January.

4. Business Planning 2021

Denis O'Sullivan and Ger Hughes joined the meeting for this item. A paper was circulated prior to the meeting proposing an approach to business planning for 2021. DO'S proposed that the model used in previous years would be used and built on, creating a template which will link with relevant HR, finance and other corporate related activity data. It was noted that the Statement of Strategy was almost complete and the Goals and Strategic options will feed into the business plan template. The approach proposed in the paper was approved by the MB.

It was agreed that Divisional objectives needed to be agreed at MB level as soon as possible, and that Business Planning would be discussed further with the SMT at its meeting on Friday 15 January.

5. International dimension to DCEDIY work

Lara Hynes joined the meeting for this item, which was introduced by CR. LH had prepared a paper to identify and assess the levels of active engagement across the Department at an international level, together with a spreadsheet outlining comprehensive list of the engagements, commitments and associated resourcing demands.

During the discussion that followed, there was a consensus about the scope for International business being dealt with more efficiently in the Department. There was a strong case for a clear coordination point for International matters. [It was agreed that the attaché would need appropriate support in the department, in order to fulfil the role. It was further agreed that existing resources currently utilised to address international matters, would require to be assigned \(to an existing or re-formed unit\) to support the international elements of the department's work in the future.](#) The MB supported the case for an attaché based in Brussels, who would be an asset for the Department, but would require appropriate supports in the Department. [It was further noted that the attaché in Brussels would only be in a position to service EU demands.](#)

The MB agreed on the need for an attaché as proposed in the paper. This would be communicated to the Department of Foreign Affairs immediately. It was noted that the lead time for such a post, if agreed with DFA, would be some six months, and it would probably be the Autumn before a person was in place.

It was agreed that LH would convene a subgroup of the SMT to work out a number of options for support structures in the Department. It would be important to avoid just a 'post-box' operation in the Department; clear co-ordination and an ability to drive policy would be needed. Options might include links between a number of relevant units, or some form of stand-alone unit, but the exact arrangements required careful examination.

6. The Lives of Traveller and Roma Communities in Ireland

This item was rescheduled for consideration at the next meeting on 25 January 2021.

7. Oberstown - Vaccination issues

Anne-Marie Kilkeny joined the meeting for this item. A paper circulated prior to the meeting raised the question of prioritising Covid vaccination for Oberstown staff, but noted that a similar issue was likely to arise in relation to other priority groups within the Department's remit. It was noted that the issue was already being pursued at the request of those in the ELC & SAC sector, and that vaccination for staff of other congregated settings (e.g. Tusla residential centres and direct provision) could also be raised.

It was agreed that the High Risks Group led by Conor Rowley's division would consider the matter further and draft a note for consideration by the Minister on the issue as a whole.

8. For Noting

The brief updates on each MB area were noted, as were the other documents listed on the agenda for noting.

Ger Hughes provided a paper on a new approach to setting the agenda for SMT. The MB members supported this approach, which would be shared with SMT for its next meeting.

9. AOB

FL reminded the MB of the forthcoming COVID-19 Induction Training sessions on 13 and 20 January.

10. Next Meeting

The next MB meeting was confirmed for Monday 25 January 2021 at 10:30.