Minutes of MAC Meeting held on 18th January 2016

Attendance: Secretary General (Fergal Lynch), Liz Canavan, Bernie McNally, Michelle Shannon and Dermot Ryan. Alan Savage and Clare Rudden reporting.

1. Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 11th January were agreed.

2. Matters Arising

The Civil Service Renewal Town Hall meeting, suggested by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, was discussed. DCYA is seeking another Department to partner with. FL will discuss further with other Sec Gens.

3. Brief Updates

FL gave updates on: (i) Central Statistics Office Workshop, (ii) NSMC [Armagh], (iii) Civil Service Engagement Survey, (iv) 2016 Business Planning, (v) PMDS, (vi) Corporate Governance Standard for the Civil Service, and (vii) Chair of Oberstown Board.

- Civil Service Engagement Survey – FL to provide a briefing at MAC of 25 January, with discussion to be tabled for subsequent MAC meeting.
- 2016 Business Planning – MAC members to provide current drafts to FL.
- Corporate Governance Standard – arrangements and process to be discussed at MAC.

DR gave updates on: (i) Tusla Reform, (ii) Tusla Business Plan 2016, (iii) Audit Report [Tusla Governance], (iv) DCYA Accommodation, (v) State Claims [Tusla meeting], (vi) CRA Report Card 2016, (vii) Audit Committee February Meeting, (viii) HIQA Reports [Residential Centres], (ix) Recruitment [DCYA, Tusla and CDS] (x) 'Finite Lives' Report, (xi) Unit Business Plans, (xii) Ethics in Public Office Returns, (xiii) IRDP, and (xiv) Gaisce.

- 'Finite Lives' Report – to be tabled for discussion at MAC

BM gave updates on: (i) Early Years Unit Staffing, (ii) IDG [Special Needs], (iii) Early Years Capital 2016, (iv) Midlands Centre Visit, (v) Youth Affairs Funding, (vi) Youth Officers National Meeting, (vii) Goal Funding, (viii) Research Ethics Committee for GUI, (ix) Open Data [DPER], (x) Participation Hub Proposal, (xi) Law Reform Commission [Cyber Plan], (xii) Sports Event [Aviva Stadium], and (xiii) Aftercare Services [Consultation with Children].

MS gave updates on: (i) Oberstown [Recruitment and Buildings], (ii) Detention School Work with CES, (iii) Stakeholder Engagement Meeting with D/Justice, (iv) Oberstown [Board of Management], (v) Adoption [Amendment] Bill, (vi) Adoption [Information and Tracing] Bill, (vii) AAI, (viii) Arc Adoption, (ix) St. Patrick's Guild, and (x) Commission of Investigation [Mother and Baby Homes].

LC gave updates on: (i) UNCRC, (ii) North South Ministerial Council [Review of Work Programme], (iii) National Board for Safeguarding Children, (iv) Tusla Policy, (v) Trevor Reddy Case [Section 3 Challenge], (vi) Louise O'Keeffe Report and, (vii) Children First [Implementation and IDG].

4. Training Needs Analysis

Ger Hughes, Sheelagh McAuliffe and Amanda Butler attended for this item and presented on the report. Methodology and staff engagement were outlined, and the results of the TNA will feed into the DCYA Training Plan and 3 Year Strategy. Common themes were discussed, along with

plans for in-house training opportunities and group training approaches. MAC members considered the report to be of a very high standard, and thanked all involved in its preparation. They also provided feedback on particular items and welcomed the level of staff engagement with the process. Next steps include to complete a 2016 Training Plan (by end Q1), to develop a 3 year strategy, to publish this report and host an information session, and to encourage staff to include training and development on the agenda of their monthly Unit meetings.

5. Risk Management

A revised Corporate Risks sheet is to be circulated for discussion at MAC meeting of 25 January.

6. Childcare Service Audit: Implications and Next Steps

BM updated the meeting in relation to the issue identified, and a report (with executive summary) was circulated in advance. The Minister has been advised of developments. It was acknowledged that funding to Early Years could increase over the years, and that the opportunity should be taken to review recipients of funding, compliance mechanisms and management relationships. It is envisaged that the new Affordable Childcare Scheme will greatly mitigate the compliance risks associated with the current CCS scheme. The internal audit of Pobal has given rise to positive change, and the advantages of an improved Service Level Agreement and tighter expenditure controls were discussed. The allocation of new staff (with governance experience) to the Early Years Unit is seen as a positive development, as is the work to be done by the design team. MAC members noted their concerns about potential systemic issues and sustainability difficulties being experienced by some providers. FL will discuss further with the Head of Internal Audit, and will report back to MAC on next steps to be taken.

- BM to check rules on notifications to the Head of Internal Audit.

7. Agency Performance Analysis

Denis O'Sullivan, Michele Clarke, Gerard Hughes and Paul Fay attended for this item and presented on the papers circulated. The status of planned capital expenditure was discussed and the importance of a robust capital plan was emphasised. The delivery of Tusla's planned recruitment for 2016 and related issues were discussed. The importance of including agency staff in recorded figures was noted. The current position of the National Childcare Information System and plans to present to the Peer Review Group were noted. It was emphasised that this is a critical piece of infrastructure to have in place to support existing systems. DR met with DPER recently on this issue.

The next Quarterly meeting between Tusla and the Minister has been scheduled for 27th January.

8. For Mention

Role of Ombudsman for Children's Office in Direct Provision

LC noted that a meeting is due to take place with OCO on this matter.

9. For Noting

(ii) FOI Report – 2015/69 to be followed up by CR

10. AOB

FL conveyed the Minister's sincere appreciation of the work done by Liz Canavan, Colm Keenan and team in preparation for and at the UNCRC hearing held in Geneva on 14 January 2016. The Minister had noted the very positive reaction from Committee members and Irish NGOs.

11. Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Monday 25th January at 10.30a.m.