

# Civil Service Management Board

29<sup>th</sup> March 2019

## 1. Policy Making (Action 22)

L Canavan outlined the thinking behind the paper.

There was positive feedback on the materials. Discussion noted that capacity is variable across the system. The materials and further proposed work will provide a platform to bring greater consistency. It was acknowledged that there is a need to position policy-making as an important skill set which is unique to the civil service and is part of the civil servants' profession. It was also agreed that the paper captures the "messiness" of policy-making and that it is important that the ongoing work acknowledges the non-linear/non-cyclical aspect of policy-making in some areas.

In respect of the materials developed to date it was agreed that they would be designed up as a suite under the "Strengthening Policy-Making" brand with the addition of some good practice exemplars.

The further work proposed including the development of an overarching leadership group and an ongoing programme of work was also agreed as set out in the paper. It was noted that the leadership group should also involve some policy-makers – including one from each of the social policy and economic policy areas.

CSMB also asked that some consideration be given to an event to launch the new approach at some stage. It was also agreed that there is a need to segment the audience as we move through a programme of work. It was also agreed that the work in terms of professional development should be taken forward in conjunction with One Learning.

## 2. Civil Service Employee Engagement Survey 2019 (Action 25) – Revised Timeline

A revised timeline of September 2020 for the next CSEES was agreed. Given the later date, the CSMB asked if consideration could be given to speeding up the production of results so that the lead-time for the management assessment and responses to the survey can move quickly.

## 3. Developing a Culture of Innovation (Actions 25 & 13)

L Fallon Byrne outlined content of the paper and initiatives which are already taking place across the system.

CSMB noted establishment of the team and launch innovation fund in June 2019. There was a short outline of the work already going on across the system including initiatives like those in the DBEI, DES, DAFM, DoH (Hackathons, Secretary General's Challenge etc.)

O Quinn – also referred to the link to OPS2020 and the work that is going on in respect of Action 6 of OPS2020.

L Fallon Byrne advised CSMB that work undertaken by Deloitte (funded by EU) on innovation levels and skills has been completed and will be made available to the CSMB.

MF also noted that this is closely connected to Future Jobs and actions for civil service set out in the Future Jobs.

#### **4. Gender Balance (Action 8.5)**

It was agreed that there are a number of issues which require further exploration to support enhanced gender equity.

Broadly, the CSMB agreed that the current levels of flexible working can be improved and it is an issue in terms of future requirement. However, it was noted that the research to date may not capture a reasonable level of local informal arrangements which are in place at an individual level across many departments.

There was discussion about the differing models and experiences of flexible working already in place across the system as well areas in which flexible working may be less easy to accommodate. Overall, it was agreed that there should be a more consistent set of principles underpinning how we might support flexible working system-wide. It was also acknowledged that organisations can sometimes support a changed culture in terms of simple signals such as the scheduling of work and meetings which are more “family-friendly”.

It was agreed that the sponsors would examine both home-grown (Central Bank) and international practices on this to give some further granularity to a discussion – including as regards what kinds of models of flexible working (both existing and new) might be appropriate in the civil service context. It was suggested we may need further qualitative research on which to base further discussions and that the focus should be on PO/Assistant Secretary level grades. Sponsors agreed to revert when further work has been undertaken.

CSMB noted the work on preparation of the handbook relating to the Maternity Leave which is aimed at upgrading and ensuring practice is consistently applied across the system.

J McKeon noted that DEASP had done considerable work in this area and it would be worth reviewing prior to finalisation.

It was also noted that the information in respect of adoptive leave might be better embedded in the document and where appropriate references to maternity should include adoptive leave where the same provisions apply. It was agreed that the language throughout the document would be reviewed on that basis.

#### **5. Civil Service Renewal Updates – Town Hall Schedule 2019**

Dates for upcoming town halls were noted.

#### **6. Communications Update (Action 23)**

There was a discussion on the role of heads of communications across the system and the important interface between the political interface and the press office of Departments.

CSMB noted that there is a need to allow for different models and a flexible approach to how communications units develop in different departments – it is not necessarily a one-size-fits-all. Nevertheless, CSMB also acknowledged the role of a proactive communications approach to meeting the public demand for information, transparency and consultation. In this regard, there is a need to bring as much consistency as possible in terms of roles, departmental capacity and standards of communications across the system.

L Canavan noted, as set out in the paper, that this is very much work in progress. Further work will be advanced with both the A/Sec Delivery Team and the PO network to include: consideration of the principles underpinning Government Communications; models for communications functions within Departments; development of a training plan to address known skills gaps; and development of communications career pathway.

## **7. Programme Directors Monthly Report**

Noted and taken as read.

## **8. AOB**

CSMB noted the IHREC Public Sector Duty correspondence issued to all Departments.

SG Fraser updated on Brexit.

29 March 2019

**Attendance**

*Martin Fraser, D/Taoiseach (Chair)*

*Niall Burgess, D/FA&T*

*Pádraig Dalton, CSO*

*Graham Doyle, D/TTS*

*Katherine Licken, D/CHG*

*Kevin McCarthy, D/R&CD*

*John McCarthy, D/HPLG*

*John McKeon, D/EASP*

*Damien Moloney, AGO*

*Shirley Comerford, PAS*

*Jim Breslin, D/Health*

*Niall Cody, Revenue*

*Mark Griffin, D/CCAÉ*

*Fergal Lynch, D/CYA*

*Robert Watt, D/PER*

*Dr. Orlaigh Quinn*

*Derek Moran, D/Finance*

*Maurice Quinn, D/Defence*

**Secretariat in attendance**

*Liz Canavan, D/Taoiseach*

*Lucy Fallon-Byrne, D/PER*

**Apologies**

*Brendan Gleeson, D/AFM*

*Seán Ó Foghlú, D/ES*

*Aidan O'Driscoll, D/JE*

*Maurice Buckley, OPW*