Summary of Progress on all Actions in the Civil Service Renewal Plan

Action 1: Establish an Accountability Board for the Civil Service

- The Civil Service Accountability Board, chaired by An Taoiseach, includes Civil Service, Ministerial and external perspectives on performance and accountability with a particular emphasis on governance and the capacity and capability of the Civil Service has been established and has met four times to date in Q2 and Q3 2015 and Q2 and Q4 2016.
- Minutes of its meetings and its Annual Reports are published.

Action 2: Establish a Civil Service Management Board (CSMB)

- The CSMB has collective responsibility for implementing the Civil Service Renewal Plan and meets on a monthly basis.
- Minutes of its meetings and Annual Reports are published.

Action 3: Set a common governance standard

- A Common Governance Standard for the Civil Service was published in 2015.

- Departments have now developed and published their own governance frameworks and are operating in accordance with them.

Action 4: Strengthen strategic planning and business planning processes

- CSMB has agreed to continue with the three-year planning cycle as set out in Public Service Management Act 1997 and the current three-year Renewal Plan represents the current strategy for the Civil Service.
- CSMB agreed a new approach to contribute collectively to the annual National Risk Assessment and Strategic Planning processes.

Action 5: Improve the delivery of shared whole-of-Government projects

- Three pathfinder projects are piloting new ways for delivering Whole-of-Government work: (i) The Public Services Card, (ii) The National Cyber Security Strategy, and (iii) Youth Mental Health.

- Two review points have been undertaken to-date and a final review point is scheduled for October 2017, which will capture the learning outcomes of the implementation process.

- A cross-agency project team has worked intensively to explore innovative ways to achieve effective Whole-of-Government action in the area of youth mental health. This includes examining the practicalities of using Section 12 of the Public Service Management Act 1997 for the first time.

Action 6: Expand the model of sharing services and expertise across organisations

- The National Shared Services Office (NSSO) continues to implement the programme of shared services, delivering Payroll Shared Services to 111,900 public servants of which 60,000 are retirees and HR/Pension Shared Services to 34,500 Civil Servants.

- The Civil Service Financial Management Shared Services Project obtained Government approval to progress to the design phase and it is on target to begin operating on a phased basis in 2018.

- Legislation is progressing through the Houses of the Oireachtas to establish the NSSO as a separate Civil Service office under the aegis of DPER.

- Shared services projects are advancing in the Health, Local Government and Education sectors.

Action 7: Significantly develop Strategic HR capability

- An overarching People Strategy for the Civil Service has been developed with the intention of strengthening strategic HR capability across all Civil Service organisations. The Strategy sets the strategic HR agenda for 2017 to 2020, based on cross-cutting strategic HR challenges faced by all Government Departments and Offices, irrespective of their size and nature of their business.

- The Strategy focuses on the following three key strategic HR priorities: Being an Employer of Choice; Build the Workforce of the Future; and Build, Support and Value Managers as People Developers.

- An enabling priority which will support these priorities relates to positioning HR as a strategic driver to ensure that HR in the Civil Service is strategically focused and provides valued professional HR expertise.

Action 8: Open up recruitment and promotion processes at all levels

- In 2016, the Public Appointments Service ran 361 advertised campaigns for open recruitment across a wide range of general service, professional and technical grades. Of the 103,873 applications received 12,852 candidates were interviewed and 7,584 assignments were made.

- The Civil Service Graduate Development Programme was established in Q2 2015 with 85 recently appointed Administrative Officers and Third Secretaries enrolled on the programme. The number of participants increased to 221 for the 2016/17 programme.

- Vacancies at Secretary General and Assistant Secretary General level continue to be filled by open competition via the Top Level Appointments Committee.

- A wide range of initiatives to improve gender balance across the Civil Service has been developed by CSMB and approved by the Government. These initiatives were announced by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform in January 2017. A Working Group is now focusing on implementing these initiatives within Departments/Offices.

Action 9: Establish a new shared model for delivering learning and development

- Preparations for the introduction of the new shared model for Learning and Development has continued including the appointment of a new Head of Learning and Development, the finalisation of a new core common suite of L&D Programmes and a new Civil Service wide skills register has been designed. The procurement process for the engagement of external training providers has been completed. A new Civil Service induction programme for new entrants has been introduced.

Action 10: Introduce structured and transparent talent management programmes to develop future leaders

- A Senior Public Service Executive Leadership programme was launched in December 2016.

- The pilot Principal Officer Executive Leadership Programme launched in May 2017.

- Work is underway on the development of a talent management framework for all grades up to and including Assistant Principal level.

Action 11: Strengthen the performance management process

- The framework for managing performance has been strengthened by the new 2-point PMDS rating format introduced in 2016.

- The Disciplinary Code came into effect in September 2016 and was accompanied by a Handbook for Line Managers. The new Management of Underperformance Policy came into effect from January 2017.

- Training has been made available to HR Units and to line managers to support the management of performance. Over 5,000 civil servants have availed of this training to-date.

Action 12: Design and implement a robust performance review process for Secretaries General and Assistant Secretaries

- Performance review process for Assistant Secretaries was introduced in 2016 and has been supported by the introduction of an e-system (LEADS) and training in effective feedback.

- The new performance review process for Secretaries General has been introduced for 2017.

Action 13: Publicly recognise staff excellence and innovation

- The Second Annual Civil Service Excellence and Innovation Awards were held in Q4 2016.
- Preparations are underway for the 2017 Civil Service Excellence and Innovation Awards which will launch on May 31st 2017.

Action 14: Strengthen Professional Expertise within Corporate Functions

- Approach to the strengthening of professional expertise in the areas of HR, ICT and Finance has been agreed by CSMB.

- The Government Chief Information Officer has been appointed as 'Head of Profession' for ICT and the Chief HR Officer for the Civil Service has been appointed as 'Head of Profession' for HR.

- The Irish Government Economic and Evaluation Service (IGEES) is now an essential part of the economic and policy framework.

Action 15: Expand career and mobility opportunities for staff across geographic, organisational and sectoral boundaries
- An Interdepartmental Principal Officer Mobility Policy was implemented in July 2015.
- A Service-Wide Mobility Scheme for Clerical Officers and Executive Officers was piloted in two regional locations and will be launched across the Civil Service in Q3 2017.
- The mobility scheme will be extended to include Higher Executive Officers, Administrative Officers and Assistant Principals in 2018.
- Guidelines for departmental internal mobility issued to all Personnel Officers in January 2017.

Action 16: Re-design organisational and grade structures
- Amalgamation of the Staff Officer and Executive Officer grades has been completed.

Action 17: Improve Project Management Capacity
- A Project Management Leaders and Advisory Service (PMLAS) has been established.
- A Project Managers' Network (PMN) of project managers from across the civil service and agencies has been established.
- The inaugural conference of the Civil Service Project Managers' Network (PMN) was held in December 2016 and included the launch of a new Project Management Handbook for the Civil Service. Two further PMN conferences were held on 'Project Governance' and 'Benefits Realisation'.
- An online portal has been established to provide access to the handbook and facilitate the organisation/administration of network events.

Action 18: Increase the authority, flexibility and accountability for managing staff resources by delegating more responsibility to Departments
- Delegated sanction for Departments is in place with exception of parts of the health, education and justice sectors.

- New workforce planning guidelines and templates issued to all Departments & Offices to facilitate preparation of their workforce plans for 2017-2019 and Workforce planning training was provided to HR Managers.

Action 19: Expand the ICT capacity of Departments and increase efficiencies by creating common systems and infrastructure
- Implementation of the Public Service ICT strategy continues under five pillars: Digital, Data, Build to Share, Governance and Capability.
- MyGovID.ie was launched in March 2017 to facilitate online access to public services.
- The Government Digital Services Gateway for interacting with the public is being developed and is scheduled to launch shortly.
- A suite of common corporate applications are being rolled out across a number of Departments to drive efficiencies and savings.
- The ICT Advisory Board are meeting regularly to review progress and agree next steps.
- eGovernment Strategy to be published shortly.
- Substantial progress and momentum has been gained on roll out of the Public Service Card.

Action 20: Implement a Programme of Organisational Capability Reviews
- The pilot review of the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport will be published following submission to Government.
- A review of the Courts Service is underway.

Action 21: Publish the framework for assignment of responsibilities for all Departments
- www.whodoeswhat.gov.ie was launched in 2016.
- A Transfer of Functions Handbook was published in 2016.
- An Induction Programme for Special Advisors was developed and implemented in 2016.
- A new Code of Standards and Behaviours for Special Advisers was developed in consultation with the Standards in Public Office Commission and is expected to be published shortly.

Action 22: Strengthen policy-making skills and develop more open approaches to policy-making
- Open Policy Debates (OPDs) to involve policy networks of practitioners, academics and experts on key issues were introduced in Q1 2015. 44 OPDs were held by mid-2017 on a range of policy issues.
- Work is advancing on the development of guidance for policy-making to support Departments on the fundamental stages of policy-making and ensure a consistent approach to policy-making is embedded throughout the Civil Service.

Action 23: Nominate a Civil Service Spokesperson to communicate on behalf of the Civil Service
- The Secretary General of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform was appointed as the Civil Service Spokesperson.
- A programme of communications and engagement with civil servants has continued through a number of channels including the network of Single Points of Contact (SPOC) in Department/Offices and Town Hall events. Civil Service Renewal publications, minutes of the Accountability Board and CSMB meetings are published on Department of Public Expenditure and Reform website at www.per.gov.ie .

Action 24: Improving how data is collected, managed and stored
- Significant progress has been made on the Open Data initiative with 4,888 high quality datasets now linked to the portal https://data.gov.ie/data
- Work has commenced to establish a framework for a National Data Infrastructure to improve how data is collected, managed and shared.

Action 25: Introduce an annual Employee Engagement Survey to involve staff at all levels in ongoing organisational improvement
- The first ever Civil Service Employee Engagement Survey (CSEES) was conducted in September 2015. Nearly 60 Civil Service organisations took part and over 15,500 civil servants responded (39%). Results were published in January 2016.
- Various initiatives are being implemented within Departments/Offices in response to the 2015 Civil Service Employee Engagement Survey. These initiatives address areas that

need improvement such as increasing internal communications; further training and career development opportunities; and increasing staff engagement.

- Two research projects are currently underway by the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) and Dublin City University (DCU) using the 2015 CSEES data.
- The next Employee Engagement Survey is scheduled to launch in September 2017.

Next Phase of Implementation

The next phase of implementation will focus on the remaining actions in the Plan and this cycle will run to the end of December 2017.