



Speaking notes for Graham Doyle

Joint Committee on Transport, Tourism and Sport Corporate Governance Framework (2019)

Date: 23 January 2019 at 1.30 p.m.

Location: Committee Room 2 LH2000, Leinster House.

I would like to thank the committee for giving me the opportunity to speak on the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport's (DTTAS) Corporate Governance Framework.

Why is good governance important?

The Department has a wide remit with high level goals in its Statement of Strategy covering Public Transport investment and Regulation, Roads and Road Safety, Aviation, Maritime Transport, Tourism and Sport with an annual budget of the order of €2.3bn.

Good governance is essential to the effective operation of a Department of this complexity and breadth. The arrangements in place help to provide assurance to me, both in my role as Secretary General and as Accounting Officer, that we are effectively discharging our responsibilities.

Corporate Governance in the Civil Service

I'll begin by focusing on the Departmental arrangements. While civil service departments have always valued strong governance, a greater focus on formalising our arrangements has its origins in a 2014 initiative on Strengthening Civil Service Accountability and Performance. That paper recommended a written governance framework as a platform for strengthening the overall management of Government Departments. This concept was incorporated into the 2014 Civil Service Renewal Plan which, at Action 3, committed to a common civil service government standard.

Our corporate governance arrangements for the Department therefore are grounded in the **Corporate Governance Standard for the Civil Service** which was led by the Civil Service Management Board as part of its implementation of the Civil Service Renewal Plan.



Department's Governance Framework

I will take you briefly through the highlights of our Framework document:

Chapter 1 frames our overall activities by setting out a general overview of the Department in terms of structures, ethos and strategy. It sets out our mission statement which is *to shape the safe and sustainable development of transport, tourism and sport, to support economic growth and social progress.*

Chapter 2 defines the roles and responsibilities of Ministerial and Senior Management Staff, the Department's relationship with our Minister and Minister for State and an overview of senior management governance roles and responsibilities. This chapter also looks at how responsibility is assigned to officers of the Department for the performance of the functions under the Public Service Management Act 1997.

Chapter 3 sets out the primary management structures within the Department to provide a means to develop the Department's capacity including the capability of the leadership team, management and staff.

Chapter 4 details the mechanisms through which the Department ensures that risk and performance are adequately managed through robust internal control systems and effective performance management practices.

Chapter 5 details the relationship the Department has with the 24 agencies under the aegis and provides an overview of the approach applied to external governance and oversight. In engaging with stakeholders, the Department strives for openness, transparency and accountability which are delivered through our robust governance structures and the relationship we have in place with our agencies.

Organisational Capability Review

With a view to continuous improvement of its overall performance, including a desire to strengthen its approach to governance and improve its strategic focus, I recommended that the Department participate in the pilot Organisational Capability Review in 2017 under the Civil Service Renewal Programme.

This was a valuable exercise which led to the development of action plan in January 2018 aligned along four "pillars" –

1. Investing in our team
2. Communication and integrated working
3. Stronger strategic focus
4. Policy implementation.



Recent structural changes to underpin good governance

A key part of ensuring effective delivery of the four pillars involved re-organising internal structures to provide for strategic leadership and ownership at both Management Board and Divisional level as implementation commenced.

These changes were implemented to strengthen all areas of governance and to demonstrate our commitment through a range of actions.

In January 2018 I centralised the corporate functions and policy co-ordination functions under a new Assistant Secretary post to give a stronger strategic focus to our Corporate Affairs and Policy Co-ordination. This reconfiguring of all the corporate functions within the remit of one Assistant Secretary provides overarching responsibility for the Department's governance and our governance structures. This included creating a dedicated governance division which deals not only with the overall Department's governance requirements but also with the oversight of the 24 agencies under the aegis of the Department. The centralising of the governance role, has provided consistency throughout the Department with a central contact point now to manage governance requirements and oversight of our governance structures in place.

I'm confident that these revised arrangements, together with structural changes made earlier last year, will help to bring a clearer focus to the successful delivery of the Department's business objectives. The reconfiguration of the corporate functions is central to this by providing the Department and all our staff with the necessary supports to deliver to the highest standards.

In addition to the above, the introduction of new structures has allowed for the consideration and refinement of implementation actions by Heads of Function (HoF) through the newly established HoF Forum.

As part of this structural change, I and my Management Board colleagues gave approval for the establishment of a Governance Committee to oversee and advise us on:

- The ongoing development of a good practice governance framework for the Department;
- The arrangements to ensure compliance with the Department's corporate obligations;
- The implementation of the Framework for the Governance of State Agencies under the remit of DTTAS; and
- The liaison arrangements with the Risk Management Committee and Audit Committee on an ongoing basis.



This structure has worked very well providing additional governance support to the Management Board and is underpinned by a Governance Calendar which records all governance requirements across the Department ensuring corporate obligations and the extent to which they are being met in accordance with an agreed calendar of activities.

The Management Board continue to play a central role overseeing the governance structures in place which includes but is not limited to:

- Engaging in Business Planning with each sector to ensure that our High Level Goals are being carried into our annual business planning and that good progress is being made on their implementation;
- Reviewing on an annual basis the Department's' Corporate Governance Framework;
- Keeping under review the governance arrangements in place with the commercial State agencies under the aegis of the Department;
- Keeping under review the governance arrangements in place with the non-commercial State agencies under the aegis of the Department.

Governance of our Agencies

Given the broad remit of the Department and the diverse range of functions which are carried out through our 24 agencies, strong corporate governance measures in respect of our agencies are essential building blocks in our overall governance structures and procedures.

The approach to the governance of our agencies takes account of the civil service framework and is also grounded in the '**Revised code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies**' published by the Department of Public Expenditure & Reform in 2016.

This is the principal framework for best practice governance arrangements applicable to commercial and non-commercial State bodies. It is intended to take account of developments in respect of oversight arrangements with the parent department and internal practices of the State body itself including reporting requirements and the appointment of board members.

In March 2018, we adopted a new framework document for the Department's oversight of both commercial and non-commercial State bodies in respect of governance.



The core objective of this document was to establish the means by which the Department as a whole oversees the governance of its State bodies and how I, as Accounting Officer, and the wider Management Board can be assured on the compliance by our State bodies with the revised Code of Practice 2016.

The framework assists with strong governance in a number of respects:

- It provides guidance to all the stakeholders with respect to Government's current objectives for State bodies and their subsidiaries and enables us maintain a consistent and structured approach to governance;
- It clearly defines the Department's relationship with the State bodies and the mechanisms to monitor output, outcomes and performance;
- The document also outlines roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders in keeping with the governing legislation of the State bodies involved.

To ensure consistency and quality in terms of outputs, the Department has provided templates for Shareholder Expectation letters, Performance Delivery Agreements, Oversight Agreements and a compliance checklist to be filled out by the State body and returned with the Chairperson's Comprehensive Report each year.

Implementation of these arrangements is reported to the Management Board with follow up actions taken in relation to any outstanding issues.

I have also put new arrangements in place to give the Management Board a stronger role in assessing requests from our non-commercial agencies for additional staffing to ensure that a stronger "whole of sector" approach is taken to such issues.

Concluding Remarks

Good Governance is of course not just a theoretical framework but is intended to lead to better outputs for the Department and its agencies. The corporate governance arrangements in place today play an important role in helping us achieve our goals and objectives.