**Open Data Governance Board Meeting**

**Tuesday, 5 July 2017**

**Note of Meeting**

**Attendance:**Dennis Jennings (Acting Chair)**,** Denis Parfenov, Dietrich Rebholz, Sue Duke, Andrew O’Sullivan,

**Apologies**: Ashling Cunningham, Sandra Collins, Cronan McNamara, Emer Coleman (Chair), Daithí Mac Síthigh, Barry Lowry

**Others:** Angela Black (CEO) and Graham Long, Citizens Information Board

**Secretariat:** Evelyn O'Connor, Marian Beakey, Fiona Morley Clarke, Krystyna Pycinska-Taylor

A number of documents had been issued to the Board in advance of the meeting as follows:

* Note of meeting held on 25 April, 2017;
* Progress report;
* Note outlining details of submissions received on foot of public consultation on the draft Open Data Strategy which was circulated for any Board observations;
* Note giving examples of the type of non-personal Freedom of Information requests received in D/PER;
* A document prepared by Derilinx, (company who provide technical support for the Open Data portal) outlining proposals for improving and updating the portal and other proposals regarding the Open Data Initiative in light of the Strategy.

The items on the agenda were discussed as set out below:

1. **Minutes of 25 April meeting.**

The Minutes were taken as approved and it was noted that these have been published on the portal.

1. **Matters Arising from the last meeting**

Progress Report

The contents of the Progress Report circulated in advance of the meeting was taken as read. This will be published on the portal.

5 Star Linked Data

Andrew O’Sullivan, CSO advised that the CSO has been offered EU funding to develop a dissemination platform to publish data in 4 star format which with further planned projects would qualify as 5 star Linked Open Data. Ireland is already seen as a leader in Open Data and this platform could make us one of the first countries to extensively publish 5 star Linked Open Data and significantly increase the potential for published Government data to be re-used. This was welcomed by the Board.

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| **Action 1 (Secretariat)** Ensure note of meeting and progress report are published on the Open Data portal.  |

1. **Presentation by Citizen’s Information Board – ‘Queries that may be addressed by Open Data’**

It had been suggested at a previous meeting that the Citizen’s Information Board (CIB) meet with the Board so as to enable the Board to get an understanding of the most popular or most frequently requested/accessed information from the CIB and how open data might help in this regard. Angela Black (CEO) and Graham Long gave a presentation which outlined the work of the organisation and the type and frequency of information requested. In particular the type of open data that would be of most benefit to the CIB would be data on waiting periods/backlogs for social welfare claims, data on the location of services, and they also thought that a centralised website for public consultation would be of benefit as this is the main way in which they can contribute to government policy. It was noted that a centralised public consultation website is currently being developed by the Department of Public Expenditure & Reform. Given the personal nature of the data generally held by the CIB, it would not be in the main suitable for publication on the national Open Data portal. It was noted that the CSO can offer assistance with the anonymisation/aggregation of data.

1. **Presentation on anonymisation (Andrew O’Sullivan, CSO)**

This agenda item had been deferred from the previous meeting due to time constraints. Andrew O’Sullivan gave an overview of the legal basis for confidentiality and the numerous options used by the CSO in the anonymisation/aggregation of data. Currently, the preferred option for the CSO is μArgus. It was noted that the ODGB has a role to play in emphasising that open data is not about individuals or personal data.

1. **Implementation of Open Data Strategy 2017-2022 and role of ODGB in this regard**

It was noted that the draft Open Data Strategy was approved for publication at the Government meeting of Tuesday 20th June. Government had agreed that a short public consultation would take place prior to it being finalised. This public consultation concluded on 4th July and there were 6 submissions received in total. Final drafting changes are being made to the Strategy and it will be published in the coming weeks. It was decided to have the Strategy professionally formatted and this process will take around 2 weeks. It was noted that all responses to the consultation process will be published on the D/PER website together with a response to the points raised. (Strategy and consultation material were subsequently published on 14th July)

It was noted that the Board in conjunction with the Open Data Unit will now have to focus on delivery of the Strategy. The views of the Board were sought on their contribution towards its implementation based on the actions that have been assigned to them which are in the main around raising awareness of and promoting open data. Some points raised included:

* The need to focus beyond the number of datasets on the national portal to usage as usage will drive availability of data – ensure that use cases are developed and showcased
* The need to move towards publishing Open Data as a norm in 5 years’ time
* The need to introduce metrics to measure progress
* The importance of ensuring that released open data remains available and up to date in the long term
* What role the Board could play to ensure consistent political and organisational support for Open Data.

The Open Data Unit will incorporate the Strategy into its own work programme and has commenced the process of developing a catalogue of public bodies and is putting together a programme of work to commence engagement with public bodies. It was noted that once the Strategy is published that the Open Data Unit will start targeting public bodies to engage in the process and that the Secretary General will write to Chief Executives of local authorities, Secretaries General and Heads of Office so as to engage them in implementing the Strategy in their respective organisations.

A document prepared by Derilinx, (who provide technical support for the Open Data portal) outlining proposals for improving and updating the portal as well as ideas around the Open Data Initiative was discussed. It was suggested that Derilinx could be invited to the next meeting. The extension of the Derilinx contract for one further year as permitted under the existing contract was also noted.

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| **Action 2 (Secretariat)** Ensure that all responses to the consultation process are published on the D/PER website together with a response to the points raised. **Action 3** Invite Derilinx to next meeting  |

**6. AOB**

**a. Next meeting**

A number of dates were suggested for the next meeting around the end of September. The Secretariat will agree the date of the next meeting with the Board.

**b. Board Membership**

It was noted that Board members were appointed to the Board at the end of October 2015 for a period of two years with the possibility of re-appointment for a further term.  The Secretariat advised that re-appointment of Board members is a matter for the Minister.   In the interests of continuity, the Secretariat proposed that it would be beneficial if the current Board members be retained for a minimum of one further year to the end of October 2018 and at that stage to refresh the membership by retaining half the membership to October 2019 and inviting some new members at that stage. This would allow the benefit of retaining expertise as well as gaining new knowledge. The Secretariat will suggest same to the Minister and subject to Board members’ agreement, letters of reappointment will be issued in due course. It was noted that Emer Coleman has indicated her willingness to remain with the Board as Chair for another year.

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| **Action 4** Secretariat to circulate agreed date for the next meeting. **Action 5** Secretariat to discuss the re-appointment of Board members with Minister.   |

**C. FOI**

Dennis Jennings had suggested carrying out an analysis of Freedom of Information requests and Parliamentary Questions to see the type of data being requested and if these could be addressed in any way through Open Data. To inform discussion, some examples of redacted non-personal requests received in the Department of Public Expenditure & Reform were circulated to the Board. This will be discussed further at the next meeting.

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Open Data Unit

Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

July 2017