

**Decentralisation Implementation Group**

**Progress Report**

**to**

**Minister for Finance**

**30 June 2005**

## **Introduction**

1.1 The Implementation Group reported to the Minister for Finance in November 2004 on those organisations which, in our view, should be the first to relocate. We undertook to deal, in our next Report, with progress on these and other areas of the project and with those organisations and locations not dealt with last November. The Government approved the proposals in that report.

1.2 The work of the Group has proceeded steadily since then. The Group has been concerned primarily with ensuring progress in relation to the property, people and business issues affecting those organisations which were prioritised as early movers.

Progress has been made under various headings

- property solutions have been identified for most of the early mover locations;
- agreement has been reached on a number of the human resources and industrial relations issues and discussions are continuing in other areas;
- detailed implementation plans have been prepared by the organisations selected;
- an additional 750 people have applied for decentralisation since 7 September last.

1.3 We have also been addressing issues relating to those organisations and locations which form the balance of the participating organisations in the Government Programme.

1.4 It is vital for the success of the overall programme that Departments and Offices, led by the appropriate Ministers and Secretaries General, build on the progress already made and intensify their preparations over the next few months.

## **Early mover Civil Service organisations**

2.1 Table 1 in our last Report listed those civil service organisations which, in the Group's view, should be the first to relocate. We set out the criteria the Group used to arrive at that determination. Table 2 of that Report listed a further six locations which we felt had, using the same criteria, the potential to be regarded as "early movers".

2.2 Since then, all of these organisations have received from the Public Appointments Service details of the applicants who have applied on the Central Applications Facility (CAF) to relocate with them. Each of the organisations have prepared an updated implementation plan.

2.3 Based on all the information made available to us, the Group is now satisfied that the lists of organisations in Tables 1 and 2 of our last Report should be regarded as one group and the same arrangements for advancing their early relocation should be applied to all of these organisations. These organisations are shown at Appendix A.

## **Property**

2.4 Purchases have now been agreed in 13 locations and State-owned sites have been selected for a further 4 locations. In at least 4 other locations, the preferred option being pursued is that of leasing accommodation. In addition, while prices have yet to be finalised, the process of acquiring sites in several other locations is at an advanced stage.

2.5 Based on information supplied by OPW, 4 locations will be available for occupancy in 2006, 14 in 2007, 12 in 2008 and 15 in 2009. The Group is of the view that the latest property availability dates are a realistic assessment of the accommodation position. Overall we believe satisfactory progress has been achieved on the property element and this will need to continue. We will, of course, keep all of the property aspects under review as part of our work programme. To this end, a reporting structure has been put in place to allow OPW to keep the Group regularly apprised on the property procurement position at each decentralised location. The Group is also being kept informed on any slippage in target dates and any other actions which may have an impact on the financial aspects of the programme.

2.6 In our Report entitled *Decentralisation office accommodation - Procurement Methodology and Financial Assessment* (November 2004), we recommended that the Government approve a maximum space requirement of 20 square metres per person, inclusive of all circulation and ancillary space requirements. This recommendation was approved by the Government. The Group believes that it is important to maintain that limit. Breaches of this limit will add to the overall cost profile.

### **Defence Forces and Gardaí**

2.7 The Group previously recommended that the decentralisation of the Department of Defence and the Defence Forces be managed in an integrated way and we asked the Defence Forces to submit an updated implementation plan. Similarly, we asked the Garda Commissioner, in conjunction with the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform to do likewise. Both submitted updated implementation plans and a separate subgroup of the Decentralisation Liaison Officers Group was established for each organisation.

### **Advance Parties**

2.8 It is now clear that a number of advance moves will be possible. A further 50 staff from the Department of Agriculture and Food will relocate to Portlaoise later this year. Garda Headquarters will also transfer around 50 staff to Thurles to populate a new Garda vetting unit in the latter half of the year.

2.9 There is, of course the possibility of further advance parties. In our July 2004 Report we detailed the necessary conditions for these. We will continue to take a positive approach to all such proposals submitted to us on this basis.

### **Implementation Plans**

2.10 We have received updated implementation plans from all of the early mover organisations. In general, these are of good quality and show that organisations are dealing with the moves in a business-like manner. The Group is now studying the cross-cutting and bilateral issues raised in these plans. The cross-cutting issues include such matters as:

- Management of provincial transfers,
- The position of professional and technical staff,
- Timing of moves,

- Maintenance of staff morale during transition periods,
- Flexible working arrangements,
- Sourcing ICT staff,
- Transition and ongoing costs,
- ICT services including video conferencing facilities,
- Servicing meetings in Brussels.

These cross-cutting issues will inform the ongoing work of the Group. Contact will be made with each organisation about the bilateral issues arising in its plan.

### **Central Applications Facility (CAF)**

2.11 The CAF facilitates the lodgement of applications to decentralise by all interested civil and public servants. The Group is glad to note that much progress has been made by the Public Appointments Service since our last Report. All organisations received details of:-

- staff within the organisation who have applied to relocate with the organisation;
- staff wishing to leave the organisation to relocate with another organisation;
- individuals in other bodies who wish to transfer into the organisation to participate in the programme.

2.12 This information has been analysed for planning purposes by organisations and inter-organisational transfers have begun. The data refers only to applicants' first preferences and when these have been exhausted, the lower preferences will be examined. We have been informed by the Public Appointments Service that, in addition to the applications made before 7 September 2004, around 750 new applications have since been received.

2.13 The Group recommends that the management of all decentralising Departments and Offices should now expedite the transfer of staff. This is necessary to provide sufficient time for adequate training and forward planning preparation. Co-operation between all organisations is a vital ingredient to the success of the transfer programme and the Group will monitor progress through the regular reports submitted to us by each decentralising organisation.

### **Industrial Relations issues**

2.14 While industrial relations matters relating to this programme are dealt with by the Department of Finance, the Group takes a keen interest in all developments in this critical area.

2.15 Proposals were tabled to the civil service unions to facilitate the orderly transfer of staff between Departments, with the focus on the early mover organisations. Comprehensive discussions produced a *Protocol for the transfer of staff* between Government Departments which will allow a critical mass of staff to be put in place.

2.16 Figures from the CAF show that staff volunteering to move in their own grade to early mover locations will not in many cases provide sufficient staff for these

organisations. We understand the Department of Finance tabled formal proposals to the civil service unions concerning the filling of promotion vacancies and detailed discussions about these proposals are ongoing. We look forward to a successful outcome to these discussions.

### **Staff remaining in Dublin**

2.17 Arrangements have been put in place to allow the reassignment of staff, within Dublin, whose posts are being decentralised and who themselves wish to remain in Dublin. These arrangements are described in the paper entitled *Staff remaining in Dublin* which had been discussed with the civil service trade unions. The aim is to ensure that, so far as is possible, only one move between organisations takes place.

2.18 This allows Departments and Offices to arrange bilateral transfers between an individual who is decentralising and one who is remaining in Dublin who has volunteered for the transfer. Seniority in the grade will be the determining factor where there are several volunteers for a Dublin post. The paper also provides for the retention of lists, by the Public Appointments Service, of staff who wish to remain in Dublin but whose posts are decentralising. These lists can be utilised where a bilateral transfer cannot be arranged.

### **Professional & Technical Staff**

2.19 Professional and technical grades are represented to some extent in most of the civil service organisations earmarked for relocation. In some cases they make up a significant element of the overall cadre of staff. The level of applications from these grades has been lower than in the general service grades. In addition, there is currently no facility for professional and technical staff to transfer to a location where their particular grade is not represented.

2.20 The Group understands that, following progress in discussions between management and unions on transfers and promotions of general service grades, discussions have now commenced on issues relating to professional and technical grades in the civil service. In particular, proposals on the introduction of an interdepartmental promotion system for these grades have now been tabled.

2.21 The Group recognises the particular complexities of the issues involved for these grades but nonetheless believes that progress in the coming months is possible, through further discussion.

### **ICT Locations**

2.22 In our last report, we specified the need for detailed planning of the decentralisation of ICT jobs by individual bodies. This task was undertaken by the Centre for Management Organisation and Development (CMOD) in the Department of Finance.

2.23 Following consultation with Departments and Offices, the Department of Finance developed a protocol for addressing any ICT staff losses that may occur during

decentralisation. This protocol suggests that organisations should, when filling decentralising ICT posts, follow a sequence that includes CAF transfers initially, followed by promotion competitions, followed by external recruitment in the event of shortfalls still existing. The protocol would allow non-IT personnel to apply for decentralising ICT posts subject to successful completion of an ICT recruitment process that includes aptitude testing, interviewing and certified ICT training. This protocol has now been presented to the civil service unions for discussion. We understand that there are some difficulties with the approach which will have to be advanced through further discussion and dialogue. CMOD is currently working on a set of proposals for arranging common training and certification, with a view to bringing these to an Interdepartmental Group for consideration and progression by the Autumn.

2.24 CMOD established an Interdepartmental Working Group to progress the procurement of data centre services. This group decided that it should seek managed data centre services from multiple providers using a framework procurement system and is now developing a set of detailed specifications which will be used to invite applications from the market before the end of 2005.

2.25 While a number of Departments and Offices have prepared outline ICT plans, we recognise that the absence of the protocol for staff replacements made detailed planning difficult. As a result of the development of this protocol, we now believe that Departments and Offices are in a position to prepare detailed implementation plans as set out at Section 5 of our last report and furnish them to us. The Group intends to give close attention to developments in the ICT area in the coming months.

### **State Agencies**

2.26 A distinct Decentralisation Liaison Officers Group for the seven State agencies, identified in our last Report, has also been in operation. It includes representatives of their “parent” Departments. All of these agencies have now produced further versions of their implementation plans. Considerable planning has been carried out in the areas of business continuity and risk analysis. Again the cross-cutting issues identified by the agencies will assist us in our work.

2.27 The Group is aware that little progress has been made to date in advancing agreement between management and trade unions on allowing both public and civil service staff to transfer into State bodies from the civil service and other State bodies and vice versa. There has been no substantive engagement to deal with these and other human resource issues relating to the relocation of the bodies concerned.

2.28 Resolution of the outstanding issues is central to the overall implementation process in the State agencies. From the outset guarantees have been provided at Government level that all those employees not wishing to transfer out of Dublin will be facilitated with an alternative public service post in Dublin. It should prove possible to facilitate the transfers of those public and civil servants who wish, also on a voluntary basis, to relocate to provincial locations. The Group recognises that proposals for inter-organisational mobility go against traditional employment practices. In our view, it is

precisely this type of ground-breaking initiative which is needed to give impetus to the implementation of the programme. Departments and agencies should engage with the unions to see what initiatives could be taken to advance this issue.

### **Health Service Relocation**

2.29 In our last Report we recognised that the decentralisation of 350 health sector posts would have to take cognisance of the restructuring of the Health Service. The Health Service Executive has since been placed on a statutory footing. The Group understands that the preliminary work of identifying the exact composition of the staff and work to be transferred has commenced. Progress on this, including discussions with the relevant staff interests, will continue during the summer. We will continue to monitor progress.

### **A post decentralised civil service**

2.30 In our report of 30 July 2004 we outlined a programme of work which was being put in place by the Departments of the Taoiseach and Finance to ensure, after decentralisation, effective and efficient collaboration between organisations in the civil service and with the wider public service. We saw this programme as being very much a part of the ongoing modernisation approach under the Strategic Management Initiative (SMI). The programme of work is underway and decentralisation is a standing item on the Groups agenda. It is providing a useful basis for review and revision of existing collaborative processes as necessary in the light of decentralisation. As part of this an inter-departmental group has been established to examine how best to manage legislative and other business with the Oireachtas from decentralised locations. A review of the role and number of interdepartmental groups is also underway. The Quality Customer Service Working Group issued a discussion paper to Departments on how to ensure that decentralisation plans take account of the full range of customer service issues and stressing the importance of ensuring that customer service issues are at the centre of decentralisation planning at all stages. We will continue to liaise closely with the SMI Implementation Group of Secretaries General in this important area of preparation for decentralisation.

### **Selection of Next Group of Organisations and Locations**

#### **Civil Service**

3.1 Our last report identified 15 organisations and locations for inclusion in the first moves and a set of 6 other potential early movers. As explained above, all 21 of these now form one group with designated early mover status. This group will continue to receive priority attention in terms of staff transfers and property procurement.

3.2 While the Group pointed out that a “big bang” approach was not appropriate, we did not envisage that the programme would be broken into discrete phases. We made it clear that, while the organisations with early mover status should command priority, the remaining organisations and locations should also receive attention. There are 24 organisations and locations forming part of the decentralisation programme which do not have early mover status and these are shown in Appendix B.

3.3 We understand that progress has occurred in these organisations and locations. In a few cases this progress has been significant and we find this very encouraging.

3.4 In addition to the advance parties mentioned in Paragraph 2.8, the Department of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs is due to transfer 12 staff to Na Furbacha in Galway. Interim accommodation has been secured and a number has already decentralised to Na Furbacha.

3.5 The OPW continues to seek accommodation in all locations. Notwithstanding the necessity to prioritise the early movers, it has made significant progress on some of the other locations. A site has been acquired or is in the process of being acquired in several of the non-early mover locations and organisations.

3.6 The Public Appointments Service has provided all civil service decentralising organisations with details of incoming and outgoing staff applications as detailed in 2.11 above. It is a feature of the *Protocol for the transfer of Staff*, discussed at 2.15 above, that it allows for the transfer of civil servants between all civil service organisations whether they be early movers or not. The agreed protocol is based on an innovative model for the bilateral and multilateral transfer of staff between Departments and Offices. With each transfer two or more people can move into place in at least two organisations. This effectively means that in transferring staff into the early mover organisations, other civil service organisations will start to become populated with their own decentralising staff when they receive people from the early mover organisations in return.

3.7 Given these facts, we now see no barrier to the advance of these organisations to a more active stage in preparing for their relocation. It is accepted that in most, but not all cases, this will be at a somewhat slower pace than the organisations and locations with early mover status. The slower pace is necessary, primarily as a result of the lower take up on the CAF evident for many of these locations. Nevertheless all the remaining organisations can embark on the work of achieving a critical mass of staff for training prior to relocation.

3.8 As we have said previously, the combination of people, business and property issues, should determine the exact timing of each relocation. To assist in this, the Group has decided to set out indicative dates by which accommodation could be made available in the decentralised locations for each of the remaining organisations. The dates take full account of the resources required to deliver the totality of both this group and the early mover group of accommodation projects. If required by business issues, one or more of these locations can be prioritised.

3.9 The dates shown in Appendix B are aggressive. While these dates are attainable, their achievement will require a vigorous and focused approach on the part of all Departments and Offices and the OPW in terms of property delivery. Without such an approach delays will inevitably arise, given the size, scale and complexity of the overall programme. Each of these organisations should now prepare the next and deeper iteration of its implementations plan. These plans should aim to address the timeframes

proposed in this report. It is already clear that the decentralisation of at least some of this group of organisations and locations will be completed by the dates shown in the table.

### **State Agencies**

3.10 The Group adopted a more individualised approach to state agencies in our last Report. Although we did propose seven of these agencies for early mover status we did not include specific timeframes in recognition of this approach and also of the fact that it is the responsibility of the board and senior management of each agency to implement Government policy. We remain convinced that this approach is the correct one.

3.11 We are not convinced at this point of the need for this Group to seek to dictate every step in the execution of the decentralisation programme to the management of State agencies. We believe that the practical management of the programme is the role of management in the first instance. However, we do believe that every State agency selected by the Government for inclusion in the decentralisation programme should have a successful relocation as a high level strategic objective. Progress on decentralisation should be discussed regularly with the parent Department and monitored at Departmental level. We emphasise the need for advancement of the programme and request each of the remaining State agencies to prepare the next and deeper iteration of its implementation plan which should be submitted to us.

3.12 Due to the heterogeneous nature of the State agencies there will be various complexities which arise in specific agencies. These problems should be addressed in conjunction with the parent Department in the first instance. Individual problems for which solutions cannot be identified may be referred onwards to the Department of Finance for further consideration.

3.13 OPW will continue to seek property solutions in respect of any agency that requires it.

## Progress on Property: Early-mover Locations

<b>Location</b>	<b>Possible procurement mechanism</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Posts</b>	<b>Indicative Construction Start</b>	<b>Indicative construction completion</b>
Athlone	DB	Department of Education and Science	108	Q1 2006	Q4 2007
Carrick-on Shannon	DB	Department of Social and Family Affairs	220	underway	Q4 2006
Carlow	DBFM	Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment	313	Q2 2006	Q2 2008
Clonakilty	DB	Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources	91	Q1 2006	Q2 2007
Drogheda	DBFM	Department of Social and Family Affairs HQ	477	Q1 2007	Q1 2009
Drogheda	DB	Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources	47	Q1 2006	Q1 2007
Killarney	DB	Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism HQ	141	Q1 2006	Q2 2007
Kilrush	DB	Revenue Commissioners	50	Q4 2005	Q4 2006
Listowel	DB	Revenue Commissioners	50	Q4 2005	Q4 2006
Newcastle West	DB	Revenue Commissioners	50	Q1 2006	Q1 2007
Knock Airport	DB	Department of Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs	164	Q1 2006	Q2 2007
Limerick	DB	Department of Foreign Affairs	125	Q4 2005	Q1 2007
Longford	Traditional	Irish Prisons Service HQ	159	Q4 2005	Q1 2007
Loughrea	DB	Department of Transport	40	Q1 2006	Q1 2007
Mullingar	DBFM	Department of Education and Science	299	Q2 2006	Q2 2008
Newbridge	DB	Department of Defence HQ	202	Q1 2006	Q3 2007
Portlaoise	DBFM	Department of Agriculture	595	Q2 2006	Q3 2008
Sligo	Traditional	Department of Social and Family Affairs	100	Q2 2005	Q3 2006
Trim	OPW designed	Office of Public Works HQ	333	Q4 2005	Q4 2007
Tullamore	DB	Department of Finance	135	Q4 2005	Q3 2006
Wexford	DB	Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government	258	Q1 2006	Q3 2007

### Balance of Civil Service Organisations and Locations

<b>Balance of Civil Service Organisations and Locations</b>				
<b>Location</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Posts</b>	<b>Indicative construction start</b>	<b>Indicative construction completion<sup>1</sup></b>
Athy	Revenue Commissioners	250	Mid 2007	Mid 2009
Ballinasloe	Railway Safety Commission	9	See Note 2	End 2008
Buncrana	Department of Social & Family Affairs	118	End 2007	Early 2009
Carrickmacross	Department of Social & Family Affairs	85	End 2007	End 2008
Cavan	Department of Communications, Marine & Natural Resources	384	End 2007	End 2009
Claremorris	Office of Public Works	142	Mid 2007	Early 2009
Donegal	Department of Social & Family Affairs	220	End 2007	Mid 2009
Fermoy	Department of Agriculture	100	End 2007	Early 2009
Kanturk	Office of Public Works	88	End 2007	End 2008
Kilkenny	Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government	62	End 2007	End 2008
Macroom	Department of Agriculture	100	End 2007	Early 2009
Na Furbacha	Department of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs	13	Early 2006	Early 2007
Navan	Probation & Welfare Service	103	End 2007	Early 2009
New Ross	Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government	125	End 2007	Early 2009
Portarlinton <sup>3</sup>	Data Protection Commissioner	22	Mid 2007	Mid 2008
Portarlinton <sup>3</sup>	Equality Tribunal	29	Mid 2007	Mid 2008
Roscommon	Land Registry	230	Mid 2007	Mid 2009
Roscrea	Equality Authority & Director of Equality	54	End 2007	End 2008
Roscrea	Garda Complaints Board	24	Mid 2007	Mid 2008
Thurles	Garda Headquarters	114	End 2006	Early 2008
Tipperary	Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform	186	Early 2007	End 2008

Waterford	Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government	225	Mid 2007	Mid 2009
Youghal	Public Appointment Service	100	Early 2008	Mid 2009
Youghal	Valuation Office	100	Early 2008	Mid 2009
<b>Total</b>		<b>2883</b>		

**Notes:**

1. Where a fit-out only is required or sites with planning permission are procured, above timescales can be shortened.
2. Solution here is unlikely to involve construction. May be purchase or lease of existing space.
3. Preferred option is to construct a single building for the 4 organisations moving to Portarlinton. These include the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, the National Educational Welfare Board as well as the 2 organisations listed here.

**Assumptions**

Decision to proceed given immediately (June 2005).

Buildings will be procured following competition advertised in accordance with EU Procurement Directives.

Suitable sites are available when required. Construction of new buildings on green-field sites.

Buildings will be procured on a Design Build basis.

Accommodation brief will be agreed with relevant organisations within 3 months of commencing procurement process.

No delays in Planning process e.g. requests for additional information, appeals.

No unanticipated site conditions, archaeology, or third party issues that give rise to delays.