Ms Jennifer Cullen,
Policy Governance & Coordination Division,
Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport
25 Clare Street,
Dublin 2

4 August 2016

Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport Statement of Strategy 2017-2019

Dear Jennifer,

I refer to your Department’s recent letter from Graham Doyle, Secretary General to Seán Ó Foghú, Secretary General, seeking this Department’s views on the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport’s forthcoming Statement of Strategy 2017-2019.

Following consultation with relevant officials within the Department, the Department of Education and Skills has the following comments to make in areas of common interest to both Departments which you may wish to consider reflecting in your Department’s new Strategy Statement.

- **Skills Development**

Your Department’s objectives and strategic actions to “support competitiveness, enterprise capability, including e-capability and sustainability”, is very welcome and fits in with some of the objectives of the recently established Regional Skills Fora and the Fora Managers.

The creation of the new Regional Skills Fora has been in the context of the strong focus on the skills agenda as part of Government policy to support economic recovery and development, job creation and tackling unemployment. This includes the development of a new National Skills Strategy published by the Department of Education and Skills in January 2016 and the publication of 9 Regional Action Plans for Jobs alongside broader Government policy including Enterprise 2025 and Pathways to work 2016-2020.

The innovative structure of the Fora sees the work plan within each region being driven by key stakeholders in the region including employers, enterprises and education and training providers thereby ensuring that the responses developed are tailored to the unique identified skills needs of their Regions.

The Regional Skills Forum Managers are required to establish and manage a strong network of working relationships between the different stakeholders in the region, with
a particular focus on liaison between enterprise and education and training stakeholders in advancing the objectives of the Skills Forum.

Further information in relation to the Regional Skills Fora/Managers can be accessed on the new Regional Skills website, www.regionalskills.ie

- Apprenticeships

The Department of Education & Skills, along with SOLAS and the Apprenticeship Council, are working closely with the Irish Hotels Federation, Kerry Education & Training Board and the Restaurants Association of Ireland in progressing a new Commis Chef Apprenticeship in advance of a rollout later this year. It is envisaged that the programme will have 85 places available across 4 regions. A number of other apprenticeship proposals for higher level chefs are also being developed by the Apprenticeship Council and these additional programmes will be rolled out in 2017. The Department of Education and Skills and its agencies are also collaborating on the work of the Hospitality Skills Oversight Group.

In this context, and in the context of the National Skills Strategy, the Department of Education and Skills would welcome the support of your Department for links between enterprise in the Tourism/Hospitality sector and education and training providers.

- School Transport

While the Department of Education and Skills does not have any specific comments or observations to make in relation to school transport services at this time, it remains committed to liaising with your Department as a key partner at national and local level in ensuring the delivery high quality transport services to schoolchildren of all backgrounds and abilities across the country.

The Department of Education and Skills also looks forward to working collaboratively with your Department in the delivery of education and training services to maximise opportunities for citizens and to enable them to acquire and develop the skills required to fully contribute to the positive development of our economy and society and to promote Ireland as a destination for work and study.

I would like to wish you success in your consultations on the development of your forthcoming Statement of Strategy.

Yours sincerely,

John Rafferty
Higher Executive Officer