



Minutes of the 432nd NESCS Council Meeting, 13th Dec 2018

The meeting took place in the Clock Tower, Department of Education.

Attendance: Elizabeth Canavan (Chair), Dermot Sheridan and Seán Reilly (DEASP), Joanne Mulholland, Maeve McElwee, Geraint Ellis, Shay Cody, Michael Ewing, Kate Ruddock, Sean Healy, Brid O'Brien, James Doorley, Sinead O'Flanagan, David Hegarty (DBEI), Paul Donnelly, Patricia King, Philip Hamell, Garret Doocey (DTTAS), Ian Talbot, Edgar Morgenroth, and Maria Graham.

Secretariat: Rory O'Donnell, Anne Marie McGauran, Damian Thomas, Helen Johnston, Jeanne Moore, Larry O'Connell, Noel Cahill, Edna Jordan, Richard Holland, and Cathal FitzGerald.

Apologies: Eleanor Denny, John Enright, Damien McDonald, Orlaigh Quinn (Dave Hegarty attending), Robert Watt, Derek Moran (Joanne Mulholland attending, John McCarthy (Maria Graham attending), Tom Parlon, and Oonagh Duggan.

NESCS Deputy Chairperson, Liz Canavan opened the meeting.

1. Minutes of the Meeting Sept 2018

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed without amendment.

2. Welfare and Employment: Platform Working:

The paper was introduced by Dr Damian Thomas. Members emphasised the need for better data and knowledge in this area. Some argues that the platform economy is being used to control workers as if they were employees, yet they are classified as self-employed. Precarious work is not all low paid and precarious work occurs not only in the private sector, but also in universities etc. The Council discussed the connection between lack of power and lack of voice. The research should address the relationship between work and quality of life.

3. Welfare and Employment: Self Employed:

After introduction by Dr Anne-Marie McGauran, members commented on the inappropriate classification of many workers as self-employed. There was agreement on the need for stronger compliance in this area and a simple way of determining whether a person was genuinely self-employed. Access to employment services is in practise restricted to those in receipt of certain social welfare payments and this limits the access of the self-employed. The treatment of the self-employment in terms of taxation, PRSI and access to benefits needs to be looked at together. Reforms should avoid creating new incentive problems. Having regard to the changing nature of work, it was suggested that the research consider different ways of ensuring an adequate level of income for all.

It was agreed that both papers would be revised in light of the Council discussion and would contribute to the wider project on Welfare and Employment. Dr Helen Johnston noted that further work included: (i) income and participation income; and (ii) gender and family issues. It is also intended to undertake research on (i) redistribution and the role of taxation; and (ii) the future of work.

4. Transport Orientated Development:

Dr Cathal FitzGerald outlined the preliminary findings of this research. Members welcomed it and agreed on the proposed principles. The key issue is how to make it happen. There are many aspects to this. First is an actor such as the Land Development Agency. The capacity of the relevant organisations is an important factor, including the capacity to engage with the many parties involved in this type of development. Second, there are processes of relevance, in particular the preparation of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies and the allocation of resources under the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund. Third, accountability, transparency and public engagement need to be addressed but without allowing local interests to dominate. Fourth, planning needs to be future proved and mistakes made in the past highlight the importance of this. The chair proposed that work be completed

in a timely manner with a view to helping to inform decisions to be made in the first half of next year: the (i) legislation on the Land Development Agency; and (ii) the publication of guidance on how local development plans are to be consistent with the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies.

5. Climate Change:

A proposal for NESCP to undertake work on climate change was introduced by Dr Rory O'Donnell. This work would include Council discussion of the draft National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) and emergent Government Climate Plan; consideration of the role of knowledge in addressing climate change; consideration of how progress can be made on key large scale cross-sectoral decarbonisation projects and a focus on international experience that can inform Ireland's climate policy development and action. The discussion highlighted issues such as the importance of communication as well as understanding what system change and transition might mean for people. The Council agreed to undertake the proposed work, depending on the timing of the NESCP and Government Climate Plan.

6. Any other business:

There was a short discussion of how to assess the effectiveness of the Council and its working procedures. The chair noted that a review of the working of the Council had been completed prior to the appointment of the current Council and this had prompted some changes, including provision for the creation of working groups. It was agreed that the Chair would reflect on the issues and revert to the Council in due course.

The Chair confirmed Council meetings start time will revert to 10.00am. Dates for the 2019 meetings will be confirmed in coming weeks.