



An Chomhairle Náisiúnta Eacnamaíoch agus Shóisialta National Economic & Social Council

Minutes of the 434th NESC Council Meeting, 6th June 2019

The meeting took place in Room 308, Department of the Taoiseach, Government Buildings.

Attendance: Elizabeth Canavan (Chair), Sinead O’Flanagan, Oonagh Duggan, Michael Ewing, John Enright, Geraint Ellis, Brid O’Brien, Sean Healy, James Doorley, , David Hegarty (DBEI), Ian Talbot, Paul Donnelly, Shay Cody, Maeve McEwlee, Philip Hamell, Anthony McCashin (TCD), Edgar Morgenroth, Michelle Norris, Michael Hough (DHPLG), Paul Cotter (DoF), Grainne McGuckin (DPER), and Rónán Hession (DEASP).

Secretariat: Rory O’Donnell, Anne Marie McGauran, Helen Johnston, Jeanne Moore, Cathal FitzGerald, Larry O’Connell, Noel Cahill, Edna Jordan, Richard Holland and Sinéad Nic Coitir.

Apologies: Eleanor Denny, Kate Ruddock, Damien McDonald, Tom Parlon, Patricia King, Orlaigh Quinn (Dave Hegarty attending), John McCarthy (Michael Hough attending), Derek Moran (Paul Cotter attending), Robert Watt (Grainne McGuckin attending).

- 1. Minutes of the Meeting April 2019:** Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed without amendment.
- 2. Transition Teams:** NESC has been asked under the Government’s *Future Jobs Ireland 2019* strategy to carry out work to support Ireland’s transition to a lower carbon and digital future. Larry O’Connell noted that a Council Working Group on this topic, chaired by council member Sinead O’Flanagan, has been established and already met on two occasions. He indicated that papers were being prepared on four thematic areas; conceptual issues and international approaches; identifying vulnerable sectors and jobs; upskilling and reskilling supports for vulnerable sectors and employees; and on the transition in the Midlands region. These papers will be discussed by the Working Group at their next meeting on the 5th of September. Members noted the progress that has been made on this project.
- 3. Welfare and Employment in Ireland:** Dr. Annemarie McGauran, of the Secretariat, presented an overview of the work on income and wealth distribution and its implications for the social welfare system. Members welcomed the work and in particular the focus on income inequality and the interaction between wealth, tax policies and the welfare system. It was suggested that this work could be built upon by examining issues such as labour market inequality, housing costs and the composition of wealth.

Dr. Helen Johnston presented an overview of the work to date on the interface between income supports and services including a summary of two case studies Childcare and Disabilities. She indicated that a Council Working Group on Welfare and Employment, chaired by Dr. Tony McCashin, has been set up and will meet for the first time on the 11th July. The role of the Working Group will be to consider the key issues emerging from the Project and to draw conclusions for the future direction and nature of the social welfare system. Council members endorsed the work that has taken place on this topic to date and identified areas for further consideration.

- 4. Any other business:** Council members marked the forthcoming retirement of the NESC Director Dr. Rory O’Donnell, thanking him for his remarkable array of work over the years and his strong commitment to public service. Dr. O’Donnell provided an insightful summary of his time working with the Council.

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday 25 September 2019.