



Minutes of the 440th NESC Council Meeting, 1st April @ 10am (via WebEx)

The meeting took place virtually via webex from the Department of the Taoiseach, Room 301.

Attendance: In room 301: Elizabeth Canavan (Chair), Online: Brid O'Brien, James Doorley, Sean Healy, Dave Hegarty (DBEI), John Kinnane (DPER), Denis Duggan, John Enright, TJ Flanagan, Paul Donnelly, Philip Hamell, Geraint Ellis, Sinead O'Flanagan, Graham Doyle, Maeve McElwee, Ian Talbot, Tom Parlon, Kevin Callinan, Patricia King, Joe Cunningham, Karen Ciesielski, Oonagh Duggan, Matthew McCann (DoF) Dave Dillion (DEASP), Eoghan Duffy & Aoife Budd (SIU, DoT), Emily Whelton (DoT), Brenda Boyalan (DoT) and Roisin Doherty (Solas).

Secretariat: In room 308: Larry O'Connell, Niamh Garvey Online: Damian Thomas, Helen Johnston, Cathal FitzGerald, Anne-Marie McGauran, Jeanne Moore, Noel Cahill, Edna Jordan, and Sinéad Nic Coitir.

Apologies: Edgar Morgenroth, Eleanor Denny, Michelle Norris, Orlaigh Quinn (Dave Hegarty attending), Derek Moran (Matthew McCann attending), John McKeon (Dave Dillon attending), and David Moloney (John Kinnane attending).

1. Minutes of the Meeting December 2020

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed without amendment.

- 2. Shared Island:** Helen Johnston provided an overview of the research work and consultation, an overview of preliminary conclusions and insights into next steps including the approach to 'digging deeper' work which it was proposed would focus on the north-west region. Jeanne Moore presented the work on climate and biodiversity. Issues raised in the subsequent discussion included the breadth of the work; attention to inequality and data on poverty since the advent of the pandemic; the importance of quality public services; community development; good jobs; and, regional development and spatial policy. The Council expressed support for the proposed work in the north-west. The Shared Island Unit of the Department of an Taoiseach expressed their appreciation and support for the NESC work on this issue.
- 3. NESC Consultation on Wellbeing Framework Update on work:** Emily Whelton updated the Council on the work by the Department of Taoiseach and the Inter-Departmental Working Group on Well-Being. Niamh Garvey gave a presentation on the NESC work. Issues raised in the discussion included the benefits of such a framework, the use of OECD framework, the importance of data collection and composite indicators of wellbeing.
- 4. Digital Inclusion:** Anne-Marie McGauran introduced this draft council report. The report was strongly endorsed by the Council. Among the issues raised in the discussion were: the need to incorporate more on digital risks and harms; changes in ICT use due to Covid-19 lockdowns and scope to use CSO data to reflect this; the importance of data and measurement; expediting the National Broadband Plan rollout; ICT access and online learning; digital skills and access for young people; alignment with other strategies; and the need for a plan for and investment in digital inclusion. It was agreed that the report would be finalised by written procedure.
- 5. Rural Resilience and Just Transition: Update on Roundtable.** Larry O'Connell updated the Council on this work. It was noted that this will support the Council's work on the Shared Ireland and the work on climate change and just transition.
- 6. AOB:** None

The next meeting will take place on Thursday, 24 June 2021.