



Minutes of the 442nd NESC Council Meeting, 30th September @ 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, Sean Healy, Dave Hegarty (DBEI), AnneMarie Caulfield (DPER), Denis Duggan, John Enright, TJ Flanagan, Paul Donnelly, Philip Hamell, Geraint Ellis, Sinead O'Flanagan, Michelle Norris, Linda Bradley (DHPCLG), Ian Talbot, Kevin Callinan, Patricia King, Caroline Whyte, Karen Ciesielski, David Dillon (DEASP), Eoghan Duffy & Aoife Budd (SIU, DoT), Michelle Kearney (DAFM), Niamh Hamill (DCCA).

Secretariat: In room 308: Larry O'Connell, Online: Damian Thomas, Niamh Garvey, Helen Johnston, Cathal FitzGerald, Anne-Marie McGauran, Jeanne Moore, Noel Cahill, Edna Jordan, Jenny Andersson, Elaine Kennedy, Sinéad Nic Coitir, Gaye Malone and Senni Määttä (Intern).

Apologies: James Doorley, Eleanor Denny, Oonagh Duggan, Tom Parlon, Orlaigh Quinn (Dave Hegarty attending), John McKeon (Dave Dillon attending), Graham Doyle (Linda Bradley attending), Mark Griffin (Brian Carroll due to attend) and David Moloney (Anne Marie Caulfield attending).

1. Minutes of the Meeting June 2021

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed with an amendment to reflect that John Hogan has replaced Derek Moran.

- 2. Work Programme 2021-2022:** Larry O'Connell presented on the proposed work programme 2021-2022 and Cathal FitzGerald presented on the Recovery and Resilience proposed project. The work plan was welcomed by Council members who referred to the relevance, importance and ambition of the five focus areas and welcomed its future-orientated focus and the cross-cutting themes that were identified.

Issues raised in the discussion on the resilience and recovery project included: the importance of recognising current government work on the strategy for recovery; ensuring the project is future-orientated on lessons for future ways of working; the importance of participation across sectors and the important role of social dialogue; reflecting the need to address both the Covid-19 recovery as well as to prepare for climate change - both climate mitigation and increasing climate resilience; the importance of governance of digital, big data and big tech to building resilience; reflecting on successes in Ireland around public information on vaccines given the risks of disinformation in other countries; including a focus beyond the pandemic response to examine policy making more generally and how the state responds to a major disruption.

Issues raised in the discussion on housing included: the title of the piece to reflect that the work will focus on areas where the Council can make a contribution rather than an assessment on the overall strategy; targets and goals within the Housing for All strategy; the importance of land value to ensuring affordability and accessibility and the knotty ongoing barriers to addressing land value; the contribution that NESC can make to exploring areas in Housing for All that require additional work, such as land value.

Issues raised in the discussion on sustainable development and biodiversity: welcoming the focus on structured dialogue in the agriculture and climate action project; encouraging the exploration of alternatives to the MACC within the project; consideration on the definition of sustainable agriculture nationally and internationally; the importance of fact-based evidence on agriculture and climate change, and including all three pillars of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental in the work, in particular farm incomes; recognising the challenge of sustainable farm incomes and

diversification; consideration of the economic impacts of climate action; on biodiversity data and strategy the role of offset requirements.

Issues raised in the discussion on a well-being framework included: the focus on identifying where wellbeing framework have improved outcomes; the importance of a focus on implementation of policy as well as the implications for governance of other organisations for whom the well-being framework might shape their policies.

- 3. Final Draft Report on Climate & Bio-diversity (Shared Island):** Jeanne Moore presented on the draft report on climate and biodiversity. It was noted that the draft report reflected the Shared Island sustainability elements in the forthcoming NDP. Issues raised in the discussion included: the quality and relevance of the paper particularly in the context of a biodiversity and climate crisis that requires a holistic response. Council agreed to sign off the report by written procedure.
- 4. Shared Island: Project Updates:** Helen Johnston provided an update on the Shared Island project and Noel Cahill outlined a draft paper regional policy issues. Issues raised in the discussion included: the age range of age cohorts in relation to labour market participation; recognising the distortion of the GDP measure in Ireland and reflecting on GNP* as more reflective of people's lived experience; the importance of creating opportunities locally in order to retain people who have upskilled within a region; and, highlighting the potential of community wealth building as an approach that has the potential to generate economic multiplier effects and to improve the economic health of the local economy.
- 5. AOB:** Power points from the meeting and the full paper on the North West to be circulated.

The next meeting will take place on Thursday, 16th December 2021.