



Taighde, Idirphlé, Comhairle

Research, Dialogue, Advice

Minutes of the 451st NESC Council Meeting (in person), Monday 18th December @ 10am
The Clock Tower, Department of Education, Marlborough Street, Dublin 1

Attendance: John Callinan (Chair), Liz Canavan (Deputy Chair), Owen Reidy, Chris Van Egeraat, Rónán Hession (DSP), Seamus Coffey, Jerry Mac Evilly, Caroline Whyte, Karen Ciesielski, Ian Talbot, Hubert Fitzpatrick, Colette Byrne, Colin Scott, Seán Healy, Nat O'Connor, Brid O'Brien, Nichola Mallon, TJ Flanagan, Damian McDonald, Noelle O'Connell, Kevin Daly (DoF) and Barry Vaughan (DoT).

Secretariat: Larry O'Connell, Cathal FitzGerald, Niamh Garvey, Helen Johnston, Jeanne Moore, Gemma O'Reilly, Noel Cahill, Damian Thomas, and Dáithí Downey.

Apologies: Niamh Moore-Cherry, Gerard Brady, Kevin Callinan, John Enright, Diarmuid Torney, John Hogan (Kevin Daly attended), Graham Doyle, and John McKeon (Rónán Hession attended).

- 1. Administration.** The minutes of the September 2023 meeting were agreed.
- 2. NESC@50:** Members congratulated the Secretariat for delivering a successful NESC@50 programme and conference on November 23rd. Cathal FitzGerald introduced a paper '*Thriving Ireland: Reflections*' to help inform the development of a NESC special publication in early 2024. The paper was welcomed by Members and issues noted included 'lived experiences' and values in the policy process; the importance of local structures and inclusive processes to policy; the value of the Shared Island approach; 'cathedral thinking' for investment; and, the widening representation in research and dialogue.
- 3. Energy & Just Transition:** Gemma O'Reilly presented an overview of proposed research on *Energy & Just Transition*. It outlined the broad energy system, several of the key challenges, and the potential for NESC to add value. Members were supportive of the work particularly around the scope to develop a shared understanding of energy policy objectives and the scale and nature of the transition; and in addressing the complexities and challenges in specific areas of the energy sector. Additional points raised in the discussion included energy and shared island; 'what and who the energy is for'; just transition in the Midlands; role of and impact on communities in the energy transition; economic and investment considerations; challenges in the planning system; energy poverty; the role of biomethane and anaerobic digestion; and the impact of the transport sector.
- 4. Building a Good Jobs Economy:** Damian Thomas introduced a paper '*Good Jobs and Productivity*'. There was a good discussion which noted the need to consider causation and correlation; macro and micro or firm level evidence; the nature and meaning of the term good jobs; job opportunities for vulnerable groups and students; the influence of the post-pandemic labour market; and a sectoral approach.
- 5. Housing & Compact Growth:** Larry O'Connell gave an update on Secretariat work on compact urban growth and viability issues, and on collaboration with the LDA, OPR, and Housing Agency.
- 6. Any Other Business:** The dates for Council meetings in 2024 were circulated.

Next meeting will take place on rescheduled date of Thursday, 28th March 2024, at the Clock Tower, Marlborough Street.