

Minutes of the 456th NESC Council Meeting (in person), Thursday, 27th March 2025 @ 10am
The Clock Tower, Department of Education, Marlborough Street, Dublin 1

Attendance: Liz Canavan (Dep Chair), Hubert Fitzpatrick, Chris Van Egeraat, Rónán Hession (DSP), Jerry Mac Evilly, Caroline Whyte, Karen Ciesielski, John Enright, TJ Flanagan, Brid O'Brien, Seán Healy, Nichola Mallon, Niamh Moore-Cherry, Ian Talbot, Diarmuid Torney, Robert Scott (DPENDR), Philip Newsome (DECC), Kevin Daly (DoF), and Claragh Mulhern (DHLGH).

Secretariat: Larry O'Connell, Gráinne Collins, Colette Bennett, David Hallinan, Niamh Garvey, Jeanne Moore, Cathal FitzGerald, Damian Thomas, Noel Cahill, and Damian Thomas.

Apologies: John Callinan, Owen Reidy, Gerard Brady, Colette Byrne, Colin Scott, Kevin Callinan, Nat O'Connor, Damian McDonald, Declan Hughes, John Hogan (Kevin Daly attended), David Moloney (Robert Scott attended), John McKeon (Rónán Hession attended), Oonagh Buckley (Philip Newsome attended) and Graham Doyle (Claragh Mulhern attended).

- 1. Administration:** The minutes of the last meeting (December) posted online in January, were agreed.
- 2. Demographic Change and Migration in Ireland:** Gráinne Collins presented an overview of the draft research paper. Members welcomed the report which they viewed as timely and important. The issues raised included greater clarity around the precise purpose of the research; ways of structuring the reporting of the work; the value of ambition and optimism in forecasting; how the work can and should inform societal understanding of and discourse around migration; the impact of aging on the labour market and services (e.g. health, care); impacts of demographic growth on biodiversity and nature; improvements to modelling and forecasting; the role of report in helping frame work across the policy system. A revised report will be brought to Council in June.
- 3. Ireland's Energy Transition: An International Trade Perspective:** David Hallinan provided a summary of the research. The Council welcomed the work, and their discussion covered the current supply chain, infrastructure, energy security/resilience/costs, and geopolitical challenges; the need for greater urgency in energy infrastructure delivery; the potential value in identifying the most critical infrastructure projects to be expedited; amendments to the data on fuel subsidies; energy demand versus sufficiency; re-visiting the core messages from the research; consideration of splitting the work into distinct elements, with an overarching Council statement. It was agreed that the report would be finalised by written procedure.
- 4. Sustainable Development: Priorities and Potential Projects:** Niamh Garvey presented an overview of a recent Stakeholder & Expert workshop which explored options for future NESC research. The Council discussed where NESC can add most value; references to the UN SDGs; the ongoing land use review; experiences of PPNs; social justice and community action. Members noted the importance of addressing polarisation; resilience and delivering practical outputs. It was agreed that the presentation would be circulated and that Members would provide detailed comments which would help identify the focus of NESC work on sustainable development.
- 5. AOB:** Jeanne Moore provided an update on work on Energy Households and Energy Communities. It was agreed that report, which would include work on Energy Poverty, would be finalised by written procedure. The work on Energy Poverty, discussed by the Council in December, would also be published as a stand alone Secretariat Paper. It was also noted that the Council's report on Energy transition and Economic resilience is expected to be approved by Government shortly and then published.

Next meeting will take place on Thursday, 26th June 2025, at the Clock Tower, Marlborough Street.