



Minutes of the 396th NESC Council Meeting, 15th February 2013

This meeting took place in Department of Education and Skills, Marlborough St. Dublin 1, at 10 am.

Attendance: John Shaw (Chair), Michael Ewing, Karin Dubsy, Siobhán Egan, David Begg, Matt McGann, Mary Walsh, Patricia Murphy, Michael O’Sullivan, Sean Ó Riáin, Anna Davies, Brid O’Brien, Seán Healy, Caroline Fahey, Ian Talbot, John McHale, Mary Daly, Edgar Morgenroth, Frank Allen, and John Murphy.

Secretariat: Rory O’Donnell, Helen Johnston, Anne Marie McGauran, Jeanne Moore, Noel Cahill, Claire Finn, John Sweeney.

Apologies: Martin Fraser, James Doorley, Oisín Coghlan, Tom Parlon, Pat Smith, Geraldine Tallon and John Moran.

1. Minutes of the Meeting of January 2013 were approved. The Chair outlined plans to make future Council minutes available on the NESC website.

2. The Social Dimensions of the Crisis: Helen Johnston outlined the revision and updating of data in the latest draft of this report. The discussion was wide ranging. It included reference to the significance of the new SILC data; recognition that the crisis has impacted on everyone as well as groups that are particularly vulnerable; the impact on well-being; the need for a clarity on public service cuts; a suggestion that more detail be included on the spatial dimension; the age profile of the long-term unemployed; reference to longer trends and issues where appropriate beyond the Celtic Tiger years; clarifying the long-standing policy on sustainability; and, in the Conclusion, greater clarity on the challenges. Members pointed to the importance of disseminating and communicating the report. Further points, regarding implications for policy, were made which are to be considered in the project on the Five Part Crisis. The new draft was welcomed by Council members and it was agreed to publish the report, subject to written procedure.

2. Ireland’s Five-part Crisis and Challenge to 2020/Ireland’s Recovery and Beyond: Rory O’Donnell briefed the Council on Secretariat’s thinking on how to progress this project. The time frame for the analysis is 2013 to 2020. The work would start with an initial overview of current conditions. The environmental dimension should be added to the five original: fiscal, economic, banking, social, and reputational. The work would proceed to identify a number of cross-cutting challenges for the medium term. For example, the challenge of creating a high-employment society links economic, social, financial, fiscal and, probably, environmental dimensions. Members welcomed the proposed plan and made initial comments on themes to be considered. These included: the importance of outside influences (such as EU policy and the global economy); the importance of imaginative thinking; the structural constraints and supports on the economy’s capacity to grow; and how to engage the public in governance and policy development. The next meeting will consider a short initial paper from the Secretariat on current economic conditions, with banking and finance to be discussed at a later meeting.

3. The Chair informed members that Dr. Clare Finn is leaving the NESC Secretariat this month to take up a post as Head of Research at the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

4. The next meeting was set for: Friday 15th March, Clock Tower, 10.00 am.