



## **Minutes of the 406<sup>th</sup> NESC Council Meeting, 17<sup>th</sup> Jan 2014**

The meeting took place in The Clock Tower, Department of Education and Skills, Marlborough St, at 10 am.

**Attendance:** John Shaw (Chair), Oisín Coghlan, Michael Ewing, Karin Dubsy, Caroline Fahey, Seán Healy, Mary Daly, Geraldine Tallon, Sean Ó Riáin, Edmond Connolly, Seámus O'Donoghue, Edgar Morgenroth, Tony Donohue, Ian Talbot, Matt McGann, Shay Cody, Sally Anne Kinahan, Manus O'Riordan, Gavan O'Leary, John Murphy, Helen Blake, and Michelle Norris.

**Secretariat:** Larry O'Connell, Anne-Marie McGauran, Jeanne Moore, Noel Cahill, Helen Johnston and John Sweeney.

**Apologies:** James Doorley, Brid O'Brien, John Moran, Pat Smith, Mary Walsh, Mike O'Sullivan and David Begg

**Minutes of the Meeting of December 2013** were approved.

1. **Matters arising:** none.
2. **Housing:** Rory O'Donnell introduced a short paper, *A Proposal on Housing Policy Analysis*, developed by the Secretariat in response to concerns expressed by Council members and others at emerging trends in the housing market. The paper proposed a Council study that would have the provision of adequate social and affordable housing as its primary focus, but would consider wider dimensions of the housing system where these have a bearing on the that issue. The study would entail substantial analytical work and significant engagement with actors in social housing. Members strongly endorsed the proposal and its central thrust. Some of the principal observations made included that some 30 per cent of the population on an on-going basis should not be expected – much less pressured - to purchase their homes, that high-quality long-term alternatives to home ownership should be available on a larger scale and with more diversity than at present (or likely under current policy), that ensuring the supply of social housing on the scale and diversity needed in a fiscally constrained environment would be immensely challenging, that the experiences of social housing associations, and how their output could be increased, should feature strongly in the study, that provision should be flexible and responsive to regional and local markets, that analyses (the NESC 2004 report included) and policy innovations (e.g., area regeneration programmes) since the turn of the century should be sifted carefully to ensure past mistakes are not repeated but learned from. It was agreed that the proposed study would complement developments elsewhere in the public system and should be prioritised by the Council and Secretariat.
3. **Data on the environment:** Jeanne Moore introduced a first draft of Council Comments that might accompany the report the Council commissioned from consultants EnvEcon Ltd. and Flannery Nagel Environmental, *The Role of Data for Greening the Economy: An Exploratory Study of its Use and Value*, and which was delivered on 18<sup>th</sup> December, 2013. She pointed to six issues in particular that concern how existing data are being used and might be used more effectively on which members views are sought by the secretariat, and that these and/or different ones might be the subject of a wider consultation. Members welcomed the consultants' work, agreed that it should be published and to work with the secretariat in refining Council comments on it. Several noted the environmental data should promote greening of society, not just the economy. A number of points were raised which the Secretariat undertook to follow up with the relevant members.

It was decided to move the April 2014 meeting from Friday 18<sup>th</sup> (Good Friday), to Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> April.

The next meeting was set for: **Friday, February 21<sup>st</sup>**, Clock Tower, 10.00 a.m.