



## **Minutes of the 409<sup>th</sup> NESC Council Meeting, 17<sup>th</sup> April 2014**

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

**Attendance:** John Shaw (Chair), Michael Layde, Caroline Fahey, James Dorley, Seán Healy, Brid O'Brien, Patricia Murphy, Tony Donohue, Michael Ewing, Karin Dubsy, John McHale, Mary Walsh, , David Hegarty, Michelle Norris, Edgar Morgenroth, Frank Allen, Shay Cody, Sally Anne Kinahan, David Begg, Ian Talbot, Tom Parlon, and Gavan O'Leary.

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

**Apologies:** Manus O'Riordan, Siobhán Egan, Oisín Coghlan, John McCarthy, Seán Ó Riain, Seámus O'Donoghue, Mary Daly, Danny McCoy, Mike O'Sullivan, Pat Smith, John Murphy, and Edmond Connolly, Niamh O'Donoghue.

**Minutes of the Meeting of March 2014** were approved.

1. **Matters arising:** none.
2. **Social Housing Provision Paper:** Rory O'Donnell proposed that the paper under discussion be published in spring/early summer with Council's approval, and other areas (e.g. ownership, planning) could be looked at later. Larry O'Connell presented the key messages and conclusions of the paper. This emphasised the profound challenge being faced in social housing provision, and the three-pronged strategy being proposed to: (i) facilitate finance; (ii) make a direct influence on supply; and (iii) increase cost rental provision, along with appropriate institutional mechanisms.

Michael Layde from DECLG welcomed the NESC work and indicated it would help to inform the government's formulation of a new social housing strategy. Council Members were very positive about the paper and there was consensus that it should be progressed with a view to early publication. Other points in the discussion included: the urgency for action in this area and the scale of the response required; focus on providing homes, not just accommodation, for the overall good of society, not just as investment for the few; structural barriers that exist in the housing association sector which limit the provision of sufficient social housing in the short term; the key role of local authorities as housing suppliers; consolidating subsidies into one for all types of housing, rather than several different types; support for new institutional mechanisms, models and sources of funding required to fund social housing; importance of protecting those on low incomes in rental properties; rent control systems are vulnerable to loopholes and can be undermined; more focus on understanding the demand for social housing and how housing needs change over the lifecycle. There was support for the continuation of the housing work beyond the current paper to look at broader interrelated issues of land use, transport and environment as well as the connections between different segments of the housing market. It was agreed to bring the paper back to the Council in May prior to finalising it for publication.

The next meeting was set for: **Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> May**, Clock Tower, 10.00 a.m.