



Minutes of the 413th NESC Council Meeting, 19th September 2014

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

Attendance: John Shaw (Chair), Michael Ewing, Oisín Coghlan, Karin Dubsky, Anna Davies, Mary Daly, Mike O'Sullivan, Edgar Morgenroth, Mary Walsh, Brid O'Brien, Seán Healy, James Doorley, Helen Faughan, Gavan O'Leary, David Hegarty, Ian Talbot, John Murphy, John McCarthy, Shay Cody, Sally Anne Kinahan, David Begg, Manus O'Riordan, Tony Donohue, Frank Allen, and Michelle Norris.

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

Apologies: Seámus O'Donoghue, Pat Smith, Edmond Connolly, Niamh O'Donoghue, Seán Ó Riain, and Tom Parlon.

1. **Minutes of the Meeting of July 2014** were approved.
2. **Housing:** There was discussion of two papers; *Home Ownership—In Reverse or Stuck in the Lights?* and *Housing and Land in Ireland: From the Current to Reform Possibilities for the Medium-term*. Rory O'Donnell outlined the context and scope of both papers. The rich discussion that followed included the welcome focus on housing as an interconnected system; the value of focusing on medium term as well as short term; the potential for a strong quick programme on social housing for the short term; the need for an institutional change and response in housing supply; capacity building for local authorities; importance of understanding local variations in policy and not just the national level.

The council suggested that in amending the papers the text should: summarise the societal benefits of ownership; the cultural and value and attitudes around home-ownership; where necessary, describe the methodology underpinning the papers. Discussion also touched on: relative merits of site value and property taxes in terms of its impact on sustainable housing development; changes in family structures, employment and social risks; policy actions necessary if increased home ownership were a goal; the challenge of active land management; the notable lack of professional developers from outside of Ireland in the market; lack of coastal housing policy in Ireland and expertise in managing coasts; the importance of building in evaluation of policy, revision and amendments; the impact of precarious employment on housing options; the scale of the problem facing society when the housing model fails; the investment potential for housing trusts, not just single units such as social impact investment models in other countries; increasing housing literacy on what's appropriate and feasible in our housing choices; and the need to examine neighbour effects research and its salience for Ireland. Mention was made of the possibility of assessing the impact of NESC work. It was agreed that the Home Ownership paper would be amended and the final version would be confirmed by written procedure. Further work will be undertaken on the Housing and Land Paper will be discussed again at a later date.

3. **Sustainable Research:** Rory O'Donnell updated the Council on the two sustainability projects to be completed before the end of the year. Firstly, Dr Frances Fahy and Dr Brídín Carroll from NUI Galway have been commissioned to undertake case study research of Origin Green, the Sustainable Dairy Assurance Scheme and green procurement as part of NESC's focus on environmental policy integration. Secondly, a restricted tender is being issued to conduct work on sustainable communities. This work will delve into the experience of local authorities and others in trying to build sustainable communities. A secondment model will be explored for next year's research.
4. **Other Business:** None

The next meeting was set for: **Friday, 17th October**, Clock Tower, 10.00 a.m.