



Minutes of the 426th NESC Council Meeting, 24th May 2017

The meeting took place in Room 308, Government Buildings, at 16.30hrs.

Attendance: Liz Canavan (Deputy Chair), Martin Fraser (Chair), Robert Watt, Michelle Norris, Philip Hamell, Ian Talbot, David Hegarty, Shay Cody, James Doorley, Bríd O'Brien, Seán Healy, Oonagh Duggan, Michael Ewing, Kate Ruddock, Rowena Dwyer, Maeve McElwee, Tom Parlon, John McCarthy, and Edgar Morgenroth.

Secretariat: Rory O'Donnell, Anne Marie McGauran, Damian Thomas, Helen Johnston, Jeanne Moore, Larry O'Connell, Noel Cahill, Sineád Nic Coitir

Apologies: Patricia King, Derek Moran (David Hegarty attended) and Orlaigh Quinn.

NESC Deputy Chairperson, Liz Canavan, welcomed members to the first meeting of the new NESC.

- 1. Minutes of the Meeting January 2016:** It was agreed that minutes from the final meeting of the previous the NESC Council would be circulated.
- 2. NESC work, working methods and work programme:** The Director provided an overview of work carried out by the Secretariat since the last meeting of the Council, as set out in the document 'Recent and On-going Secretariat Work'. He outlined the document, 'NESC Working Methods', developed with the Department of the Taoiseach. This identifies the distinctive characteristics of NESC work, the range of working methods, reflecting the changing context, and the variety of types of output from NESC work. He summarised the document 'Note on Discussion of Initial Work Programme'. This builds on work sanctioned by the previous Council and work undertaken by the Secretariat since January 2016. Draft topics included: Jobless Households; Housing; Climate and the Low-Carbon Transition; Infrastructure, Circular Economy and Natural Capital.

In terms of work undertaken by the Secretariat, members asked that where papers are complete that these would be circulated to the members. In the case of the work on Jobless Households, it was asked that this work be completed as soon as possible.

Members welcomed the codification of the range of working methods, and noted that these would allow more interaction among members, better links with wider relevant expertise and a means of linking more effectively with other research and policy stakeholders. It was noted that on each of the work areas, on a proposal from the Secretariat the Council would authorise and approach to analysis, consultation and engagement. It was also noted that additional Council meetings could be convened should the need arise.

In discussion of the possible Work Programme members highlighted the importance of NESC's distinctive contribution and the need to maintain this in a more crowded policy space. Members drew attention to Brexit and the long-standing challenge of identifying underlying vulnerabilities, housing, land use and land value betterment, the National Planning Framework, the huge unmet challenge of transition to a low carbon economy and society, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the changing world of work, and the role of credit in the economy. The possibility was raised that, where appropriate, the government departments might brief the Council on issues such as Brexit. It was agreed that, taking account of the discussion, the Secretariat would, in dialogue with the Department of the Taoiseach, draft a proposed Work Programme.

- 3. Any other business:** The next meeting was set for Friday 29th September 2017.