



Minutes of the 429th NESC Council Meeting, 29th March 2018

The meeting took place in the Clock Tower, Department of Education.

Attendance: Elizabeth Canavan (Chair), Tony Fahey, Brid O'Brien, Damien McDonald, TJ Flanagan, John Enright, Feargal O'Brolchain, David Hegarty, Shay Cody, Tom Gerarty, Sean Healy, Michelle Norris, Derek Tierney, Dave Walsh, John Conlon, Michael Ewing, Ian Talbot, Edgar Morgenroth, Patricia King, Philip Hamell, and James Doorley.

Secretariat: Rory O'Donnell, Anne Marie McGauran, Damian Thomas, Helen Johnston, Jeanne Moore, Larry O'Connell, Noel Cahill, Sineád Nic Coitir, Edna Jordan, Richard Holland, and Cathal FitzGerald.

Apologies: John McCarthy (Dave Walsh attending), Orlaigh Quinn (Dave Hegarty attending), Maeve McEwee, Oonagh Duggan, and Kate Ruddock.

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

1. Minutes of the Meeting December 2017: It was agreed that minutes from the final meeting of the previous the NESC Council would be circulated.

2. Sustainable Development Work Programme: The Director provided a verbal update on three projects being undertaken as part of this work, namely: (i) Agriculture, Climate Change and Water; (ii) Multi-stakeholder agreements on energy and low-carbon transition and (iii) Methods of appraisal, cost benefit analysis and option generation for climate change policy and the low-carbon transition.

3. Low work intensity Households:

The discussion focused on the Conclusions (Chapter 10), developed by a Council Working Group. Prof Tony Fahey (UCD), who chaired the Council Working Group, initiated the discussion. The Council approved the report and highlighted the following issues:

- The Job Activation Programme is working reasonably well does not disadvantage unemployed people.
- The system and policy supports are focused on the individual and lacks a strong household dimension.
- Activation policies should include those seeking work but who are not on the live register.
- Labour market shortages provide an opportunity to engage with hard to reach cohorts, but this requires a cross-governmental approach.
- Training programmes need to be better aligned with skill needs, and firms have a role in upskilling staff.
- Some parts of the activation system work better than others and have built up a high degree of trust with clients.
- The welfare and activation system is complex. Both clients and providers need help to navigate the system.

The report was approved and the Secretariat will produce a final document to go to Government.

4. Land:

The Council discussion on the revised draft focused on the following issues:

- There was a broad consensus on the urgency of the housing crisis and the relevance of the analysis.
- This report is a NESC input into a key policy debate at a critical juncture in the policy cycle.
- There was some divergence of views on some of the policy proposals contained in the draft report.
- It is nec to change the current dysfunctional housing and development land systems.
- The report also has key lessons and learnings for the proposed new National Regeneration and Development Agency (NRDA).

It was agreed that a revised version of the report, containing an Executive Summary, would be circulated by the 6th April for sign off under Written Procedure within a week.

5. Any other business: The next meeting was set for Thursday 5th July 2018.