

**Minutes of the 455<sup>th</sup> NESC Council Meeting (in person), Thursday, 19<sup>th</sup> December 24 @ 10am**  
**The Clock Tower, Department of Education, Marlborough Street, Dublin 1**

**Attendance:** John Callinan (Chair), Liz Canavan (Dep Chair), Hubert Fitzpatrick, Chris Van Egeraat, Brian Duff (DSP), Gary Tobin (DETE), Jerry Mac Evilly, Caroline Whyte, Karen Ciesielski, Damian McDonald, John Enright, TJ Flanagan, Shay Power (IDA), Noelle O'Connell, Nat O'Connor, Brid O'Brien, Seán Healy, Nichola Mallon, Colin Scott, Seamus Coffey, Niamh Moore-Cherry, Diarmuid Torney, Ken Cleary (DPENDR), Evin McMahon (DECC), Fergal McParland (DECC), Kevin Daly (DoF), Claragh Mulhern (DHLGH), Kevin Callinan, Ian Talbot, and Joe Cunningham.

**Secretariat:** Larry O'Connell, Cathal FitzGerald, Helen Johnston, Niamh Garvey, Jeanne Moore, Damian Thomas, David Hallinan, Noel Cahill, Gemma O'Reilly, Damian Thomas and Grainne Collins.

**Apologies:** Owen Reidy, Gerard Brady, Colette Byrne, John Hogan (Kevin Daly attended), David Moloney (DPENDR Ken Cleary attended), and Graham Doyle (Claragh Mulhern attended).

- 1. Administration:** The minutes of the last meeting (September) were agreed and posted online in October.
- 2. Ireland's Future Power System and Economic Resilience:** Cathal FitzGerald presented the paper. Members welcomed and strongly supported the paper's call for greater clarity, coherence, action, and sequencing of decision-making in relation to this critical, and cross-cutting area of policy. Issues raised included underlying (and wider) systemic failure; effectiveness of the planning system; the all-island dimension; evidence and uncertainty around economic impact, particularly export potential; high cost of electricity; State ambition and creation of necessary demand; aligning a wide range of public bodies; costs of inaction and compliance; environmental obligations; consequences for land use; community buy-in and consultation; potential new markets and industries and co-benefits; working towards goals, taking time to get things right; the role of the higher education sector; prioritising or sequencing the recommended actions; and expanding on what Ireland's potential is. It was agreed that further detailed comments be provided to the Secretariat and that the report would be finalised by written procedure.
- 3. Energy Transition as an Opportunity to Eliminate Energy Poverty:** Helen Johnston summarised the paper. Members welcomed the paper but noted the need to consider how this work fits within the wider energy work and work on poverty more generally. Issues raised included excess winter mortality; deep poverty; access to home benefit support package; impact of international examples and lessons; comparative assessment of supports in Ireland; role of carbon tax revenue; nature and responsibility for and impact of advice and advisors; gas dependency and impact on prices; and, digital literacy.
- 4. Understanding and Deepening Compact Growth:** Noel Cahill presented a paper on compact growth. The Chair proposed developing a concise Council Statement setting out the core arguments, opportunities and challenges.
- 5. NESC Strategy 2025-2028:** Damian Thomas provided an overview of Strategy and the consultation process, noting that, subject to final editing and formatting, it has been approved by the NESDO Board. The Strategy was endorsed by the Council. A number of issues were noted including the encompassing focus and purpose of NESC work and the location and method of hosting Council meetings.

**Next meeting will take place on Thursday, 27<sup>th</sup> March 2025, at the Clock Tower, Marlborough Street.**