

Minutes of Irish Fiscal Advisory Council Meeting (16th July 2020)

Online

10.00am-2.15pm, Thursday 16th July 2020

Present

Mr Sebastian Barnes
(Deputy Chairperson)
Dr Martina Lawless
Dr Michael McMahon
Ms Dawn Holland

Attending

Dr Eddie Casey
Mr Kevin Timoney
Ms Friederike Vogler
Mr Killian Carroll
Mr Elliott Jordan-Doak
Ms Karen Bonner
Mr Brian Barbieri (for item N^o 7)
Ms Gemma Bewley (for item N^o 7)

Apology

Mr Niall Conroy

Proceedings

Sebastian Barnes chaired the meeting.

1. Closed Session

The Council discussed the feedback on the Board Self-Assessment Evaluations.

2. Admin/Financial

- **Declarations of interest:**

There were no declarations of interest.

- The Council **approved the minutes** of the full session of the Council on 6th and 8th April 2020. Michael proposed and Martina seconded them.

The Council also **approved the minutes** of the interim online meetings held on 24 April, 1 May and 22 May regarding the Fiscal

Assessment Report and 18 June, 29 June and 6 July 2020 regarding the Long-term Sustainability Report. Martina proposed and Dawn seconded these.

- **Matters arising**

There were no matters arising.

- **Policies for review (3):**

The Council reviewed three policies, which were reviewed by the A&RC at its recent meeting.

- **Anti-Fraud Policy.** The Council reviewed and agreed this unchanged policy.
- **Learning and Development Strategy.** The Council reviewed and agreed this unchanged policy.
- **Recruitment Policy and Procedures.** The Council reviewed and agreed this changed policy.

- The **Council Member's Fees and Time Buyouts** for the period January – June 2020, as set out in letters of appointment (and approvals set by Department of Public Expenditure and Reform), were approved.
- The Council reviewed a letter from the ESRI regarding the continuation of the **Shared Services Agreement**, on existing terms until a review is concluded. The letter was agreed for signature by Sebastian as Acting Chairperson.
- Eddie advised that the Secretariat participated in the ESRI training regarding Covid-19 protocols in the office. Currently access to the office is in limited circumstances and the Secretariat continue to work remotely.
- **Standing items:**
 - **Purchases and Receipts book** The Council reviewed the Purchases and Receipts book for March, April, May and June 2020.
 - **Management Accounts:** The Council reviewed the management accounts for Q1 2020, which were reviewed by the Audit & Risk Committee at its meeting on 15 April 2020.
 - **Recruitment Update:**

Eddie advised that Frederike's contract will be ending on 26 August 2020. Sebastian, on behalf of the Council, wished Frederike well in her future career and thanked her for her contribution to the Fiscal Council Secretariat and particularly her work on the Long- Term Sustainability Report.

Plans for recruitment in respect of a replacement research assistant will be discussed at a future meeting.

- The Council received two **Parliamentary Questions** since the last meeting.
- **FOI Update:** The Council received no FOI requests since the last meeting.
- The Council reviewed section 2 Staff and Resources of the **Risk Register** and agreed clarifications to 2.3 (Job Descriptions) and 2.5 (Succession planning).
- **Audit & Risk Committee meeting:** Martina, Chairperson of the A&RC, reported on the meeting held on 15 April 2020, summarised as follows:-
 - Review of Management Accounts Q1 2020 which are recommended to the Council;
 - Update on scheduling of C&AG audit commencement;
 - Update on the review of the Risk Register;
 - Review of three policies;
 - Review of the Governance handbook and agreed updated in respect of the facilitation of induction and the organisation of training/mentoring as required for Council Members.

The Council appointed Dawn Holland as a Member of the Audit & Risk Committee (16th July 2020-15th July 2023).

- **Info Security/GDPR:** There were no matters to report. It was noted that the Secretariat continue to work remotely and off-site IT security system updates are in place.

- **Recent and Forthcoming Meetings:**

- Recent:**

- Sebastian provided an update on the IFI network meeting held on 2 July 2020. Sander van Veldhuizen is serving as Chairperson and Sebastian Barnes as Deputy Chairperson until the end of this year.

- Forthcoming:**

- Eddie will circulate a poll to agree a date for the Council Meeting in August.
 - Forthcoming Audit & Risk Meetings 2020: A meeting will be scheduled to review the C&AG audit, which it is anticipated will be concluded shortly.

3. OECD Peer Review

The Council discussed the progress of the ongoing Peer Review, it is anticipated that the report will be finalised by the end of the year.

The draft booklet in respect of Council Member Appointment(s) via the PAS process was reviewed and feedback will be provided to strengthen the requirement for Board type skills and experience.

4. Review of FAR, Oireachtas Appearance, and Minister's Response to the FAR

Eddie provided an update on the Web/Media analytics related to the Fiscal Assessment Report May 2020. The Council also discussed the Oireachtas appearance and the Council also noted the Minister's response to the FAR.

5. Long-Term Sustainability Report - Review

The Council reviewed the media coverage of the Long-Term Sustainability Report, published on 15 July.

6. Communication

Eddie presented an update on communications to include recent media coverage, website and dashboard ideas and twitter communication.

7. Update on Summer Work (including Summer Internships)

Brian and Gemma, the Summer Interns, joined the meeting. Killian outlined the project which involves collecting historical Irish government expenditure data, from 1922 onwards, into a format that can be easily used for future research. A summary of the data will be provided and empirical work will be carried out using this new dataset.

8. Pre-Budget Statement Plans

The Council discussed the timelines for the Pre-Budget Statement.

9. AOB

There was no other business. The next meeting will take place on a date tbc in August.

Signed:

Acting Chairperson

Dated: _____