

Minutes of Irish Fiscal Advisory Council Meeting (27th March 2025)

ESRI Ground Floor Conference Room

9.00am-1.00pm, Wednesday 27th March 2025

Present

Mr Seamus Coffey (Chairperson)

Dr Michael McMahon

Dr Adele Bergin

Mr Alessandro Giustiniani

Prof Stephen Millard

Attending

Dr Eddie Casey

Mr Niall Conroy

Mr Killian Carroll

Mr Brian Cronin

Ms Nara Gómez

Ms Karen Bonner

Attending (for item Nº 4 only)

Representatives

Department of Finance,

Economic and Budget Division

Proceedings

1. Closed Session

The Council met in closed session.

2. Admin/Financial

- **Declarations of interest:**

There were no declarations of interest

- The Council **approved the minutes** of the meeting of the Council held on 3 March 2025. Stephen proposed and Michael seconded them.

- **Matters arising**

There were no matters arising.

- **Update on OECD recommendations**

The Government Legislation Programme (Spring 2025) has listed the draft legislation regarding proposed amendments to the Fiscal Responsibility Act for 'Priority Drafting Spring Session 2025'.

- **Annual review of the effectiveness of internal controls**

The Council is satisfied with the effectiveness of controls for 2024, having reviewed:-

- (i) the draft 2024 unaudited Financial Statements including the draft Governance Statement and the draft Statement on Internal Control;
- (ii) the minutes of all meetings of the Audit & Risk Committee;
- (iii) the internal and external audit reports, progress on implementation of recommendations and the reasonable assurance in respect of the Statement of Internal Financial Control;
- (iv) the risk register at each meeting;
- (v) the 2024 annual Board Self-Assessment Evaluation Questionnaires;
- (vi) agreed the draft 2024 Annual Report; and
- (vii) Letter of attestation from the ESRI providing assurance in respect of the operation and maintenance of an effective system of internal control in respect of services provided by the ESRI to the Fiscal Council under the shared services agreement.

- **Standing items:**

- The next meeting of the A&RC is scheduled for 1 May
- Section 2 (Staff and Resources) of the **Risk Register** will be reviewed after the next A&RC meeting
- The Q1 2025 **Management Accounts** will be available in mid-April.
- The Council received twelve **Parliamentary Questions** since the last meeting.
- **AIE/FOI Update:** The Council received no AIE requests since the last meeting. The Council received no FOI requests since the last meeting.
- **Info Security/GDPR:** There was nothing to raise in respect of information security or GDPR.

- **Recruitment Update:** Applications for the Summer Internship Programme 2025 closed on 3 March, shortlisting has taken place and interviews are scheduled for 1st and 2nd April.
- **Purchases and Receipts book:** The Council reviewed the Purchases and Receipts book February 2025.

The Irish Economic Association (IEA) Membership was discussed, it was agreed that IEA individual memberships will be maintained for 2025 and that the Council will consider organisation membership in 2026.

- **EU IFIs**
An update was provided in respect of EU IFI activity.

- **Recent and Forthcoming Meetings:**

Recent:

- Central Bank Conference - The Evolving Statistical Landscape: 20 March

Forthcoming:

- Niall, Killian and Brian attending IEA: Belfast 8-9 May
- 17th Annual Meeting of the OECD Working Party for IFIs and Parliamentary Budget Officials: Chile, 14-16 May
- Seamus attending EU IFI Network: Madrid, 12 June
- Forthcoming Council meetings 2025: 22 April
- Forthcoming Audit and Risk Committee meetings 2025 @ 9.30am: 1 May

3. Research Strategy

The Council reviewed and agreed the draft checklist ensuring a consistent approach is applied, aligning with the Council's research priorities and strategy, when the Secretariat is considering undertaking new analysis, modelling or research ideas to include pitching potential work prior to commencement.

4. Department of Finance Presentation

The Council had a discussion ahead of Department of Finance Presentation.

John McCarthy, Chief Economist/Assistant Secretary General and colleague(s) from Department of Finance's Economic and Budget Division joined the meeting and presented forecast projections in respect of its Annual Progress Report 2025 covering the years 2025 to 2030 and responded to questions raised by the Council. The Council thanked the Department of Finance representatives who then left the meeting.

5. Endorsement Discussion

The Council held further discussions related to the Department of Finance's preliminary forecast projections in respect of its Annual Progress Report 2025 in the context of a decision regarding endorsement.

The Council was satisfied that the final forecasts are within an endorsable range, taking into account the methodologies used and the plausibility of the judgements made. The Council endorses as within the range of appropriate forecasts the set of macroeconomic projections prepared by the Department of Finance for its Annual Progress Report 2025 covering the years 2025 to 2030. A draft of the text of the endorsement letter will be circulated for review and final approval.

The Council will discuss the endorsement process and assess the macroeconomic projections in the forthcoming Fiscal Assessment Report (FAR).

6. Ongoing Work

An update was provided on current work plans to include:

The potential timelines for the endorsement note and the FAR will be determined by the Government's Annual Progress Report 2025 publication date.

The BEPS paper is currently being finalised for review with plans to publish on 8/9 April. A more comprehensive draft of the Revenue and expenditure comparisons paper should be available over the next few weeks. It is hoped to present on progress on the VAT pass-through paper at the next Council meeting. In addition, work is progressing on plans for an updated climate paper.

The Summer Internship project will help enhance the core component model, updating demographic and population projections, to contribute to part of the Council's next long-term sustainability report.

7. AOB

There was no other business. The next Council meeting will take place on 22 April 2025.

Signed:

Seamus Coffey (Chairperson)

Dated: _____